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**REDEFINING CHOREOGRAPHY FOR *THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW*
FOR A NEW GENERATION OF ACTORS**

by

TIMOTHY ELLIS
B.A. LaGrange College, 1989

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Fine Arts
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in the College of Arts and Humanities
at the University of Central Florida
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2007

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ABSTRACT

As many veterans of musical theatre strive to keep a stronghold on the traditional form of the art with shows like *Oklahoma*, *Show Boat* and *Carousel*, we must recognize the life of said art form must also appeal to the mindset of new generations. In 1973, a rock musical began making waves in London's theatrical community. *The Rocky Horror Show* was like nothing anyone had seen before. The show had a plot but was presented like a rock show. The characters paid homage to a youthful faction of society wanting to express its individualism.

Musicals continue to explore new avenues and bring new faces to the theatre. Shows such as *Rent*, *Saturday Night Fever* and *Wicked* have garnered interest from a younger audience. Songs from these shows are appealing to the masses just as the songs from *Oklahoma* and *Carousel* did in the 1940's. A growing interest in musical theatre by the younger population can pique their interest in discovering other musicals.

One way to satisfy this piqued interest is by infusing a youthful or modern energy to shows that can be adapted to the senses of this younger generation. *Oklahoma* or *Carousel* might not adapt well by being set in the 21st century. But *The Rocky Horror Show* already exudes a timeless energy with its nod to popular culture (its rock music influence). As musical theatre transforms with its audiences, so can some of its well-known shows.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Earl Weaver, who served as Director for the University of Central Florida's production of *The Rocky Horror Show* and whose collaboration and mentorship were key to my process;

To Earl Weaver, who chaired my thesis committee. Thank you for your time, your patience and your friendship;

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To my other classmates: Chantry Banks, Michael Biggs, Margaret-Ellen Jeffries, Joe Kemper, Leah Page, Jennie Sirianni, Tara Snyder, Samantha Stern, Erika Wilhite;

To the cast and crew of the University of Central Florida's production of *The Rocky Horror Show*;

To my family, whose never-ending support is my inspiration.

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

The journey of choreographing *The Rocky Horror Show* was educational in the daunting challenge of moving twenty-six actors around the stage and my commitment to bringing a new energy to such a well-known story. Some people might ask what's wrong with staging the show the way it has always been. There's nothing wrong with presenting a conventional staging of a show. But I believe it's more challenging for an artist to approach a show by using what is inspiring to him in the dialogue and music. It certainly helps the creative process to research past productions of a show and receive seeds of wisdom from that research. But a director or choreographer can only honor himself by bringing his vision to a production.

While researching *The Rocky Horror Show*, I concentrated on well-known stage productions; though, one must pay homage to the film adaptation. What Richard O'Brien brought to the stage was like nothing the stages of the world had experienced. The production team at the University of Central Florida (UCF) hoped to bring something new to *The Rocky Horror Show*. Our cast of young university students brought few pre-conceived notions to the show. As the production team and cast of the original *The Rocky Horror Show* gathered to bring life to a new idea, so did the UCF contingency bring new energies to its own production.

Every facet of my process choreographing *The Rocky Horror Show* has been gathered for these pages. The show's history got me excited about how this quirky little

show put itself on the map and ultimately gathered a cult following. As I listened to several recordings of the show as well as the arrangements for our production, I jotted down ideas for the staging of each number. Those notations translated to choreography and blocking. Rehearsals brought more note taking and tweaking. And many pages later the first performance took place.

When I first got the script for *The Rocky Horror Show* my head spun a little wondering how I would successfully mould the contents of its pages into a stage production. Once the process began, things just started to flow. What follows is the outcome of that flow, even if there were a few bumps and new streams to follow here and there.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORY OF *THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW*

Plays or musicals that bring a new voice to the world of theatre are borne out of seemingly innocent creative sparks. “...(C)reations are usually unpredictable and notoriously accidental” (Michaels, 23). As Richard O’Brien notes in his interview for *Rocky Horror: From Concept to Cult*, “*Rocky* started as a way for me to spend winter evenings when I was an out-of-work actor. It was the very first thing I’d ever written...I just wrote some songs I liked. I put in some B-movie dialogue and situations” (41). He would play the songs for his friends and especially his girlfriend at the time, Kimi Wong.

Richard met Jim Sharman, a well-known Australian director, while performing in London productions of *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Hair*, in the early 1970’s. Though Richard was let go from the production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, he met with Mr. Sharman to play him some of the songs he’d been working on and discuss what plot he’d concocted. At that time, the title of the show was *They Came from Denton High*. Sharman was fascinated with the music and the story and immediately set out to find a producer. His first target was Michael White, an independent theatre producer.

Original London Production, 1973

Michael White agreed to produce the new musical and made an investment of 2000 Pounds – with today’s currency conversion, that is less than 3700 U.S. dollars.

The show was set to perform in the Theatre Upstairs of the Royal Court Theatre. It was a small space, containing about 60 seats. The newly formed team of O'Brien, Sharman and White set out to bring the script to life. The performance at the Theatre Upstairs was to be considered a workshop production and was slated to run for three weeks.

The team, along with Royal Court casting director, Gillian Diamond, cast the show and went into rehearsal with O'Brien in the role of Riff Raff, Tim Curry as Frank 'n Furter, Patricia Quinn as Usherette/Magenta, Little Nell as Columbia, Jonathan Adams as the Narrator/Dr. Scott, Christopher Malcolm as Brad, Raynor Bourton as Rocky, Julie Covington as Janet, Paddy O'Hagan as Eddie. Richard Hartley was brought onboard to do the musical arrangements. In Patricia Quinn's interview for *Rocky Horror: From Concept to Cult*, she acknowledges, "There were no Transylvanian dancers in the play. It was just all of us. Richard, Nell, Tim and I were the only guys from Transylvania" (133).

With a very small budget, the creative team built the atmosphere of the show with whatever was handy. Going along with the B-movie feel of the script, the theatre was dressed as a dilapidated cinema house. All of the songs were sung on a microphone that hung from the ceiling above the stage. Jonathan Adams notes that "...the Narrator was the only fully formed character and dialogue in the original script because, without his explanations of both plot and character, the plot-driven play would be all but incomprehensible, based as it is so entirely in fiction and imagination" (160).

The Rocky Horror Show premiered on June 19, 1973. "The original show was slated for three weeks in the upstairs space at the Royal Court. It extended to five weeks. It then moved to the Chelsea Classic Cinema in the King's Road" (137). This new musical built an audience that included celebrities, who got wind of its popularity and rushed to see what the buzz was about. *The Rocky Horror Show* continued to grow as it moved from venue to venue. Understudies were added and they became the "ghouls" who acted as the ensemble. The show finally settled into the Essoldo, which was renamed the King's Road Theatre, and made a home there for the next three years. It finally made its West End debut in 1979, at the Comedy Theatre, playing until September of 1980. The original production was named Best New Musical, in 1973, by the London theatre critics.

Los Angeles, 1974

The show's next stop would be Los Angeles, and the Roxy Theatre. The Roxy Theatre opened in September of 1973 and one of its owners, Lou Adler, was a prominent figure in bringing *The Rocky Horror Show* to Hollywood. This would be an important introduction to American audiences. Tim Curry's performance as Frank 'n Furter had gained him quite a following and he was the only London cast member invited to perform in the Los Angeles production. American and Canadian actors were hired to play the remaining roles.

The Rocky Horror Show made its American debut on March 24, 1974. Its cast included Jamie Donnelly as Magenta/Usherette, Abigale Hanes as Janet, Bill Miller as Brad, Graham Jarvis as the Narrator, Bruce Scott as Riff Raff, Boni Enten as Columbia, Kim Milford as Rocky, and Meat Loaf as Eddie/Dr. Scott. The successful nine-month run at the Roxy prompted an agreement with 20th Century Fox to turn the play into a film.

The Rocky Horror Picture Show, 1974

The show's original director, Jim Sharman, would direct and a number of the show's original cast members would reprise their roles: Tim Curry as Frank 'n Furter, Richard O'Brien as Riff Raff, Patricia Quinn as Magenta and Little Nell as Columbia. Jonathan Adams would join his cast mates, but this time he wouldn't be playing dual roles. For the film, Mr. Adams would only be portraying Dr. Scott. To the surprise of some of the original team, the production company decided to bring in two up and coming American actors for the roles of Brad Majors and Janet Weiss – Barry Bostwick and Susan Sarandon. Fresh from portraying Eddie in Los Angeles, Meatloaf was cast as Eddie. Other new members to the *Rocky Horror* team were Peter Hinwood playing Rocky and Charles Gray playing the Narrator. The voice of Rocky, however, would be dubbed in by Trevor White.

The land of the Transylvanians would find itself inhabited by many new creatures. Frank 'n Furters little cult would have a number of members in the film

version. Jeremy Newson was featured as Ralph Hapschatt in the opening wedding sequence. His new bride, Betty Munroe, was played by Hilary Labow. The rest of the roles were filled out by Perry Bedden, Christopher Biggins, Gaye Browne, Ishaq Bux, Stephen Calcutt, Hugh Cecil, Imogen Claire, Sadie Corre, Tony Cowan, Fran Fullenwider, Lindsay Ingram, Peggy Ledger, Annabelle Leventon, Anthony Milner, Pamela Obermeyer, Tony Then, Kimi Wong (O'Brien), and Henry Woolf.

Jim Sharman and Richard O'Brien worked together on the screenplay. Richard Hartley was again on the team serving as musical director and arranger. Terry Ackland Snow was brought in as Art Director.

The film was scheduled to shoot for eight weeks at Bray Studios, in England. A dilapidated chateau, Oakley Court, which sat not far from Bray Studios was also used for many interior shots. Shooting began on October 21, 1974. Again, the team found itself with a tight budget and they used ingenuity to bring the story to life. Originally, the plan was to film much of the beginning part of the film in black and white and then add color with Frank 'n Furter's entrance. This would have added to the cost of the production so the idea was scrapped.

Just as Rocky's voice was dubbed for the film, the voices of the Transylvanians (the ensemble) were dubbed. During filming, the actors would lip sync to the pre-recorded music. The singing voices were provided by Liza Strike, Helen Chappelle, Clair Torrey, Brian Engel and Barry St. John. An interesting change from stage production to the film version appeared in the film's opening. The audience would hear

the song “Science Fiction” and would see the lips of Patricia Quinn, but it would not be her voice. Richard O’Brien provided the vocals for “Science Fiction.” “The finished product premiered in London at the Rialto cinema on 14 August 1975 after a series of disastrous pre-screenings in the United States” (Michaels, 187). “The film ensured a sort of immortality for Richard O’Brien’s concept. However, the substance of the play had already been diluted in the making of the film” (327).

It appeared that *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* would be a tiny blip in cinematic history. A few film houses in Los Angeles would play the film now and again after its opening in 1975, but there was a Fox executive who thought it had a life ahead of it. In early 1976, he persuaded the management of the Waverly Theatre in New York City’s Greenwich Village to add *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* to its list of midnight screenings. “(Tim) knew enough to know that it was certainly a film that a predominantly gay audience would have been likely to appreciate, as well as other creatures of the night, unknown in the respectable suburbs occupied by up-and-coming Fox executives” (331). The movie found a polite and appreciative audience at the Waverly. The audience reactions to the movie were born at this little theatre in New York – the birth of a cult classic.

Original Broadway Production, 1975

It may have been fortune smiling on the *Rocky Horror* team that the birth of the movies cult following occurred in New York City, since the stage version was discarded

quickly from its Broadway stage. The success of *The Rocky Horror Show*, in London and Los Angeles, could only have been followed by a move to Broadway. Lou Adler would follow the show to New York City, as its producer. Most of the Los Angeles cast would make the move to Broadway.

Tim Curry would continue to play Frank 'n Furter. This time, Richard O'Brien would follow his show to the United States and reprise his role as Riff Raff. Meat Loaf would return to Broadway in the role of Eddie/Dr. Scott (he had appeared in the original Broadway production of *Hair*). Filling out the rest of the cast was Jamie Donnelly as Magenta, Boni Enten as Columbia, Abigale Hanes as Janet, Kim Milford as Rocky, Bill Miller as Brad, and William Newman as the Narrator.

The Rocky Horror Show debuted on Broadway March 10, 1975, at the Belasco Theatre. With its introduction to Broadway, the show got a bigger band and a bigger playing space. The Belasco Theatre seats over one thousand patrons. The size of the theatre would make it difficult to play the intimate community thus far presented in other productions. The show closed on April 6, 1975, after 45 performances.

The cult following of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, though, kept Richard O'Brien's story alive along with the long run of the London production of the stage show. The popularity of the movie version also prompted many productions of the stage version around the world – on the professional level, university level and at community theatres. Rocky would find a rebirth in New York City with a Broadway revival in the year 2000.

Broadway Revival, 2000

This time around, *The Rocky Horror Show* found itself in a more intimate setting, at the Circle in the Square Theatre. And because of the widespread popularity of the film version, there was an audience eager to see a live production. To bolster the audience's intrigue, this production threw a twist into the casting of the show. Lea DeLaria, a Broadway veteran, was cast as Eddie/Dr. Scott. This was a nod to the idea of blind casting. Tom Hewitt took on the role of Frank 'n Furter. Dick Cavett, a well-known television personality, was brought in to play the Narrator. Following these cast members were Jarrod Emick as Brad, Alice Ripley as Janet, Joan Jett as Columbia, Daphne Rubin-Vega as Magenta, Raul Esparza as Riff Raff and Sebastian LaCausé as Rocky. Six Phantoms also inhabited the stage at the Circle in the Square Theatre: Kevin Cahoon, Deidre Goodwin, Aiko Nakasone, Mark Price, Jonathan Sharp and James Stovall.

The Broadway revival opened on Oct. 19, 2000. It enjoyed a run of 437 performances, closing Jan. 6, 2002. It received four Tony Award nominations, including Best Revival of a Musical. Raul Esparza received a Theatre World Award for his performance of Riff Raff.

The producers, director and choreographer for this production of *The Rocky Horror Show* brought a new energy to the production. The show was geared to appeal to an already-established audience (those fans of the film version) and to an audience that was influenced by MTV. Audiences were encouraged to interact with the show as if

they were attending a screening of the film.

Audiences seem to revel in the escape from life that *The Rock Horror Show* provides. “The thesis of Richard O’Brien’s show employed the very basics of the psychology of theatre...the theatre breeds a sense of being different, apart, not ordinary...” (20). In other words, there’s a little freakishness in all of us and we live for those moments when we can be ourselves or root for characters we can truly empathize with.

CHAPTER THREE

STAGING AND CHOREOGRAPHY IDEAS

Because *The Rocky Horror Show* is unlike most other musical theatre, with its rock 'n roll concert feel and the audience's penchant for becoming a part of the show via verbal responses to the action, it produces a youthful excitement among its participants. The thrill I felt about working on the show matched that of the rest of the production team and the cast. Most people are familiar with the film version of the show, so I chose to use the Broadway revival of *The Rocky Horror Show* as a guide for my approach to staging and choreography.

Revisiting a show one has previously worked on may appear a simple task (I previously choreographed *The Rocky Horror Show* for Atlanta's Dad's Garage Theatre), but the approach the UCF production was taking evoked new energies – including new score arrangements, a departure from choreography usually associated with the show, and a bigger cast. My experience with the production at Dad's Garage had been unusual as I had to choreograph the show before rehearsals began. I taught the choreography to the dance captain and presented her and the director with my blocking and choreography notes. The director also videotaped me performing the choreography for each number. The director and dance captain would use what I had given them to put the show on its feet. We were all confident this method of my choreographing the show would be successful as I had worked with most of the cast

members in the Dad's Garage production. I served as choreographer for their production of *Debbie Does Dallas*, and many of those cast members were returning for *The Rocky Horror Show*. They were comfortable with my style.

With the UCF production, I was bolstered by the chance to really work with the cast throughout the process. My being around for the rehearsal process would allow me to fix and tweak and solidify the production team's vision of the show. This production would be the largest I had choreographed thus far and I was happy to meet the challenge. Earl Weaver, the director, had new visions for *The Rocky Horror Show* and I was eager to be a part of his team.

Once casting was complete, we had a female playing Dr. Scott; two Slave Boys who were the Narrator's minions; and a sizeable ensemble of Ushers, which included three female Usherettes who would serve as Frank 'n Furter's "Tranny Trio." Broadway's revival in the year 2000 had also utilized a female actress in the role of Dr. Scott, who also portrayed Eddie, but Weaver's production would bring new life to the character of Dr. Scott as you will read in the upcoming pages. The decision was also made that this production would feature an Usherette singing "Science Fiction" and its reprise, rather than the actress playing Magenta. The Narrator and her Slave Boys would also indulge in the jollity of many group numbers.

As this was my thesis project, I was assigned all of the musical numbers for staging and/or choreography, except "Over at the Frankenstein Place" and "Super Heroes." Earl also wanted to utilize the ensemble (Ushers) as much as possible –

inferring a Greek chorus, of sorts. For me, this would enhance the reactions of Brad and Janet. By including the Ushers throughout the show, the impact of Frank's cult figurehead could be maximized.

At first, it was a challenge to include the Ushers in a majority of the scenes without distracting from the action at hand. At times, there were as many as 26 cast members onstage. But once the importance of the Ushers to the central storyline was made clear, their presence actually aided in focusing attention to the action.

Casting for *The Rocky Horror Show* took place late during the Fall semester. This provided about six weeks for my pre-production preparation. The auditions had provided a pretty solid introduction to the abilities of each of the cast members. It was my wish to choreograph the show in a manner that would challenge the cast members without compromising the varying levels of ability.

Because of the content of the script and the style of the show, it was announced at the first rehearsal that all cast members needed to become comfortable with physical contact of any nature. The performances had to match the rawness of the script. All cast members jumped right in and were completely comfortable with each other. Because they were classmates, there was no awkward introduction to becoming comfortable with physical contact. Most of them already had daily contact with each other in their classes.

Pre-Production Process

Much of my pre-production work was spent listening to different cast recordings to become fully familiar with the sound, tempos and musical feel. Kip Taisey, the music director, had also provided CD's to the production team and cast with examples of musical styles he hoped to capture with his arrangements of the music. There would be an infusion of a gospel feel to portions of the rock and roll score. Kip and I also discussed how staging for certain numbers could be affected by the gospel style.

As I listened to the different cast recordings, I would write down ideas for different numbers. I would envision possibilities for the staging or choreography and discuss with Earl Weaver, the director, and Kip Taisey. I believe in a strong collaboration of the production team. There should be a unified vision of what ultimately appears on the stage. We wished to open up the possibilities of stylistic approaches to each of the musical numbers in the show. For example, the Tranny Trio would pay homage to the girl groups of the 1950's and 1960's (as they did in "Charles Atlas" and "Toucha Touch Me") and a gospel feel would heighten the energy or emotion of songs in the show ("Whatever Happened to Saturday Night," "Once in a While" and "I'm Going Home").

A sizeable cast presents the opportunity to utilize a lot of space. As Jon Jory states in his *Tips: Ideas for Directors*, "The whole stage is pristine when the play begins, and the director should have used every inch of it by the time the lights go down for the last time. Eat the stage" (86). I happily approached this theory in my staging of *Rocky Horror's* musical numbers. We decided to eat as much of the theatre as we could. The

atmosphere for UCF's production reached into the audience to bring them into the world of the Transylvanians. Therefore, some of the actors found themselves blocked in the house as well as on the stage. This enhanced the inclusion of the audience in the production.

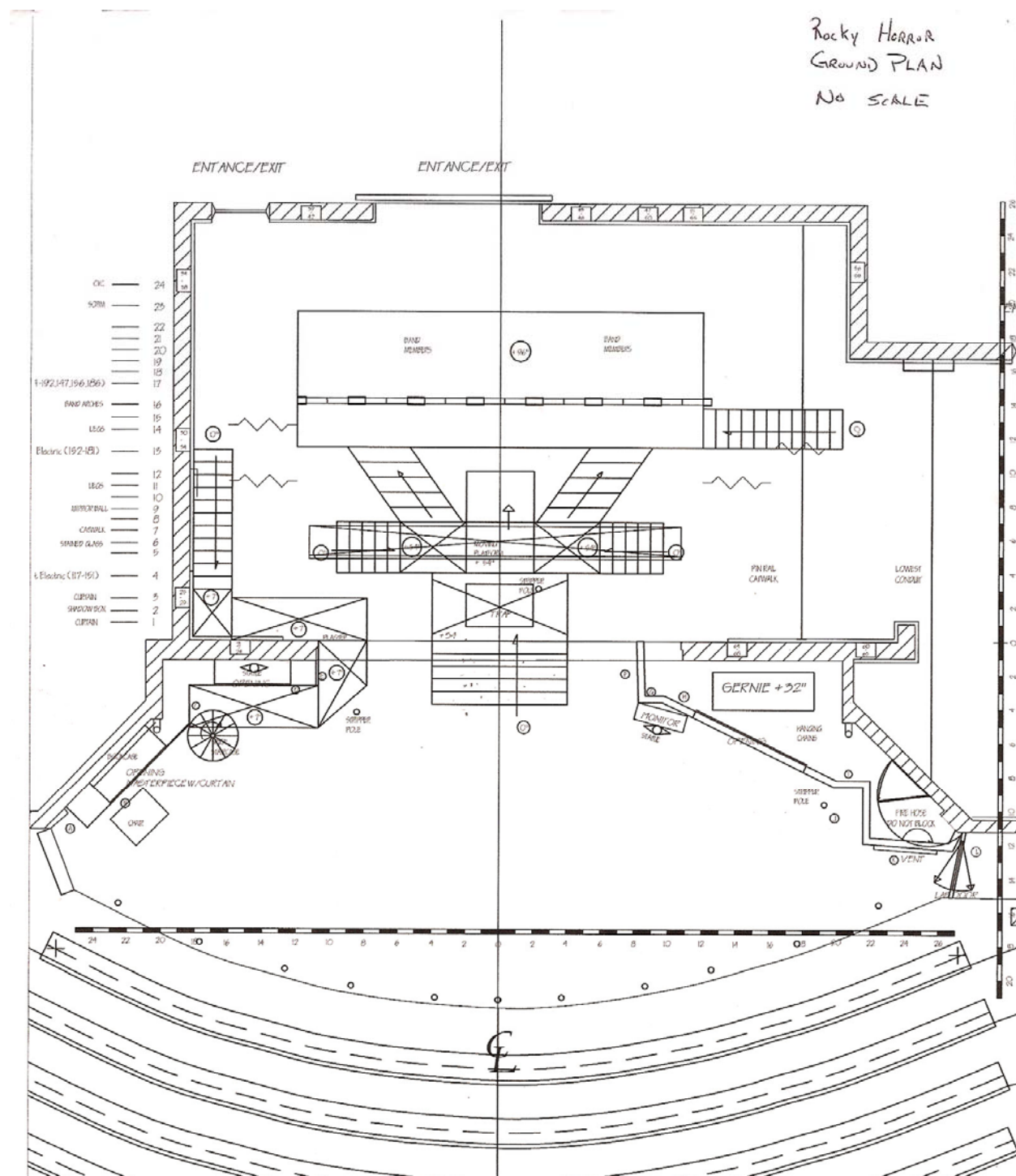
It was imperative I keep in mind the world we were working with and creating: *The Rocky Horror Show* as a rock musical, an essence of this generation's MTV music videos, and the look of the show via costuming. Harmony McChesney, the costume designer, developed an updated look for the Ushers, in conjunction with the subtle MTV feel that Earl Weaver was introducing. The Usher's costumes maintained a suggestion of movie ushers and included allusions to "grunge" and anime characters.

Once I had a feel for the sound and energy of the show I got into a studio and started moving around. The University of Central Florida's musical theatre graduate program is associated with Seaside Music Theater in Daytona Beach, and there are a number of rehearsal studios available for student use. My process for choreographing a show is very trial and error. I allow the music to inspire the movement. Once I perform dance steps I believe suit the music and the show's characters, those steps are written into the musical score in accordance with where they fit in the music.

Before putting any staging on paper, I required a rendering of the layout of the set. I also needed to know how many levels existed on the set and where new levels occurred. The sizes of the levels would also affect how many dancers/characters could utilize said space. Placement of scenes was another factor – as different areas of the

stage would be used for specific scenes. Sightlines and lighting plots also needed to be considered.

As a member of the production team, I am provided setting plots that include measurements as well as instructions for the set builders. This is very helpful for deciphering heights of set pieces, set wagons and platforms. The inclusion of measurements and details, though, makes it difficult to mark up a layout to determine staging. Therefore, I often draw a version of the set plot in Microsoft PowerPoint that allows a cleaner format for sketching out staging and blocking. The following pages contain figures of the original set plot and the drawing I used to sketch out blocking.



1. Terry
2. Lacey
3. Donovan
4. Khristy
5. Brittany
6. Samantha
7. Matt
8. Taylor
9. Erika
10. Javier
11. Rachel
12. Andrew
13. Kelli
14. Madison
15. Chantry

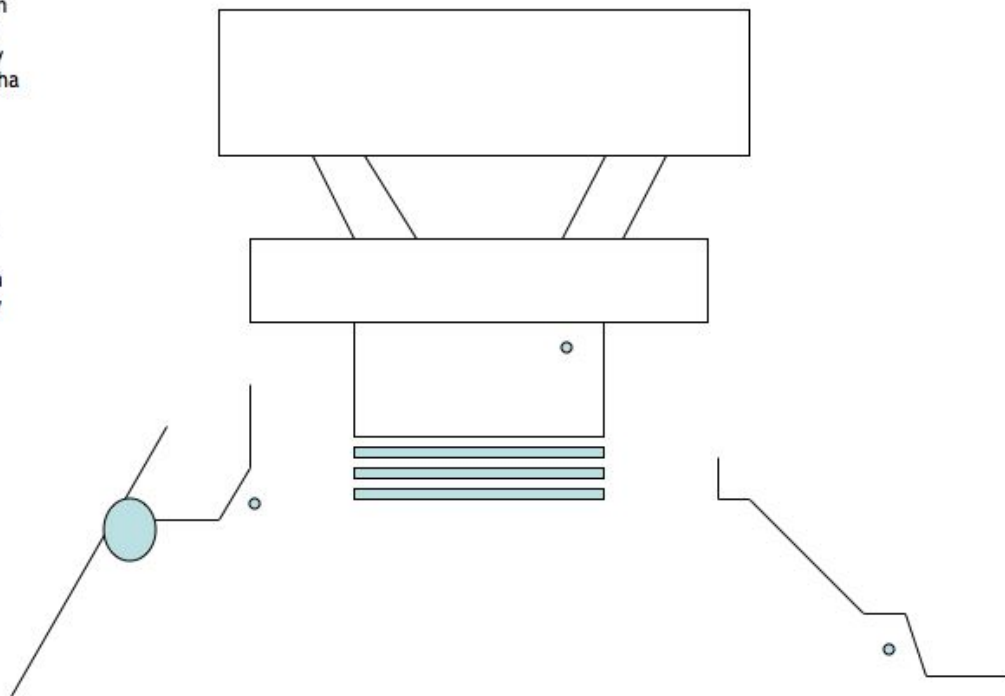


Figure 2: PowerPoint drawing of UCF set plot

For blocking purposes, I assigned each of the Ushers a number. As I placed each Usher on the stage, their number would appear with a circle around it (see Appendices for examples). For the named characters, character initials were used. The blue circle on the left side of the drawing (stage right) is a spiral staircase up to a balcony platform. The three smaller circles on the drawing represent stripper poles that were utilized on the set. The three small, blue rectangles are stairs up to the center

platform and the lines creating a “V” between the two upstage platforms represent steps from one platform to the other.

Figure 2 provides a clear view of all available entrances and exits on the stage level. On stage left, there are exit stairs attached to both upstage platforms, an exit is available around the stage left side of the middle platform and there is a door all the way downstage left. On stage right, there are stairs attached to the middle platform and entrances and exits may be made on the stage level around the side of the middle platform. During the week of technical rehearsals, an escape ladder was added to the stage right side of the upstage platform. This allowed for a quick entrance and exit by Eddie during “Eddie’s Teddy.”

Paying attention to the essence of each of the characters was also vital in my staging and choreographing process. Frank ‘n Furter is the fearless leader and needs to take the stage with the essence of unattainable stardom. Eddie is the charismatic rock star adored by all who welcomes his fans with open arms. Brad has a stoic innocence, a need to be a protector, and a latent sense of sexuality. Janet presents innocence and attempts to disguise a sexual urgency. Magenta and Riff Raff are raw and calculating. They take joy in observing and analyzing human creatures. Columbia is sort of the jester of the group who has an unwavering love for life and Eddie. Dr. Scott presents a powerful demeanor though confined to a wheelchair. The Narrator is confidante to the audience – and in UCF’s production, a participant in the world of the Transylvanians. The Ushers are caught up in Frank ‘n Furters cult-like world and

emphatically acquiesce to his wishes.

“Time Warp”

The first number I approached was “Time Warp.” This is a very well-known song in the show, and fans of the film are familiar with the steps created by David Toguri, who choreographed *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. The goal of UCF’s production team was to bring a fresh approach to this musical. Therefore, I decided we would not reproduce the recognizable steps of “Time Warp,” but would pay homage to the original choreography (i.e. a jump to the left and the pelvic thrust).

Tackling a signature song from *The Rocky Horror Show* allowed me to determine what direction the rest of the musical numbers would take. There would be moments when the soloists would be allowed to shine with minimal backup. There would be moments when the verve of a musical number would seduce all of the characters into the dance. I wanted the choreography to be cohesive while maintaining the idea that each of the characters had their own style.

“Time Warp” is Brad and Janet’s ultimate introduction into the world they have stumbled upon. I allowed the seductive quality of the music and the lyrics to inspire the choreography. The musical introduction to the song is also the first moment the Ushers are truly energized. Riff Raff, Magenta, Columbia and the Ushers lose themselves in the frivolity of the “Time Warp” dance much like today’s society gets caught up in dances like the Electric Slide or the Macarena.

Riff Raff gets everyone going with his beginning vocals and I wanted to give him an open part of the stage to do that. During the musical introduction to the song and part of Riff Raff's first lyrics, the Ushers, Magenta and Columbia found their way to an organized clump stage right. They would face Riff Raff, Brad and Janet and begin losing themselves in their joy of the song while continuing to seduce Brad and Janet.

As the energy of the song built so did the choreography being performed by the Ushers, Magenta and Columbia. I allowed Riff Raff to play in the space between the clump and Brad and Janet. The actor playing Riff Raff was quite capable of utilizing the space while adding to the spectacle being witnessed by Brad, Janet and the audience. The energy among the ensemble would build and build until they were taken over by their hedonistic love of the "Time Warp" dance. The choreography and lyrics worked hand-in-hand at the moment Riff Raff sings "...the blackness would hit me and the void would be calling" (O'Brien, 15). This was the crossover into the "Time Warp" theme step – a moment when the Transylvanians would fill the stage.

The signature steps for the "Time Warp" theme in the film version are simplistic and fun. I believe that's what makes the dance attractive to movie audiences who bask in its lightheartedness. My approach to our theme step would be vital to the creation of the rest of the show. Earl Weaver wanted to create a production for an audience that would find joy in observing rather than interjecting the responsive banter heard at screenings of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. It would be my challenge to create exciting new steps that lived up to the quirkiness, sexuality and carefree nature of the Transylvanians.

Attending to the sexuality of some of the lyrics, I decided to have the Transylvanians disperse into couplings for the “Time Warp” theme step. It would be their own gavotte of sorts. As Brad says later, “...they may do some more folk dancing” (18). I would give names to certain choreography so the dancers could have an image of what was wanted. The ‘Elvis knees’ referred to a bending over at the waist, arms in front and a quick swivel of the knees left and right two times. The ‘hoedown cross’ gave the dancers the proper image for crossing one foot over the other shin with both arms bent and taken to the side. The ‘Busby Berkeley’ circle referred to a tight circling around oneself with arms stretched upward in the opposite direction palms facing skyward. This ‘Busby Berkeley’ circle was utilized to open up space on the stage for Columbia’s and Magenta’s solos.

The phrase “just a jump to the left” would become the moment the Transylvanians began their couple dance – all jumping to the left and ending up back to back. The “step to the right” would be a circling around of each other to lead up to the pelvic thrusts. The coupling would be energized at “put your hands on your hips” with each partner putting his/her hands on the other’s hips. Then they “pulled their knees in tight” toward each other and connected pelvis to pelvis. The “pelvic thrust” would be the Transylvanian’s choreographed salute to intercourse. The theme steps would repeat with each visit to the chorus of the song but the Transylvanians would find themselves with a different partner each time. The final repeat of the chorus found all of the Transylvanians lined up across the stage, with Riff Raff in the center, and the two sides

facing him to present a communal pelvic thrust. For the end of the dance, the ensemble returned to the area of their first organized clump and dissolved into a pile of bodies, a la *Caligula* (only clothed), and Riff Raff returned special attention to Brad and Janet.

The solos performed by Magenta and Columbia in “Time Warp” were also given a new energy. Magenta started her solo surrounded by the male Ushers. She basked in their adoration but quickly dispensed of them to turn her attention to the audience. I had her prowl toward the audience on the stage floor to entice their focus. She was soon joined by the female Ushers who intensified the sexuality Magenta was selling. A female pop star must have her back up dancers to frame her. I felt Columbia needed a solo with a little more oomph – particularly her dance break. Though Columbia’s tap solo would start with simpler tap steps, I wanted it to grow in intensity and prove more difficult as it progressed. In addition to this, I decided to add two of the female Ushers into the fray. Their excitement about Columbia’s dancing would inspire them to join her and ultimately outshine her with their agility. The interruption would be unwelcome by Columbia and she would toss them back into the group of Ushers. Undeterred, Columbia would show off with some fancy footwork of her own before we found our way back into the chorus of “Time Warp.”

“Time Warp” became a joyous celebration for the Transylvanians with features for Riff Raff, Magenta and Columbia. The audience did not seem to have an averse reaction to our introducing new steps to this signature song. They were invited to perform the steps they knew from the film during curtain call. I think we achieved an

exciting spectacle for this true introduction to the inhabitants of Frank 'n Furter's castle. (See also APPENDIX A for blocking notes and APPENDIX Q for sample choreography notes)

“Science Fiction”

The remaining songs were choreographed pretty much as they appeared in the order of the script. “Science Fiction,” or the “Prologue,” is our introduction to the world of the Transylvanians. Lyrically, it also pays homage to the world of science fiction B-movies from the 1950's and 1960's. For the UCF production, the Ushers would begin their journey as a Greek Chorus. I wished to establish the audience's fascination with these quirky characters and prompted the Ushers to enter with an attitude that would also make the audience a little uncomfortable. I advised the Ushers to take on the attitude of those students we all observed in high school who marched to a different drummer and basked in their individuality. For my own purposes, I envisioned the characters portrayed by Ally Sheedy and Judd Nelson in the 1985 film *The Breakfast Club*.

Rather than begin the show with an overture of musical themes from the score, Kip Taisey and I agreed upon a musical introduction that would allow the Ushers to enter, have individual moments with the audience and then fill the space of the stage. The introduction would flow into the music of “Science Fiction.” The number is usually a specialty for a singular Usher on the stage who welcomes the audience to the tale. The

background vocals may come from offstage voices or may come from other Ushers on the stage. As Earl wished to utilize our Ushers as much as possible, I decided to give them choreography to complement the lyrics of the song. We also incorporated the actor playing Eddie into the number as an Usher.

Because I enjoy unexpected staging, I did not place the Usher singing “Science Fiction” center stage for the beginning of the number. I like to keep an audience on its toes. Our featured Usherette entered with the rest of the Ushers and was placed far stage left at the end of the musical introduction. As she began singing, a tight spotlight enveloped her face and then widened to include more of her body as she told the tale and found her way center stage to allow for a full audience perspective.

I gave the Usherette simple, campy choreography for portions of “Science Fiction” which playfully acknowledged the hilarity of science fiction B-movies. The rest of the Ushers had their own choreography to incorporate the same playfulness while maintaining an attitude of the high school outcast. At particular moments they would lose themselves in their true love for these B-movies and some of its actors.

Two benches were preset on the stage as well as two tall, lit boxes containing stained glass windows, suggesting a chapel. The benches were used sparingly during the opening number but I staged the Ushers around the two benches for the very end of “Science Fiction” in a way that would carry us into the next scene with Brad and Janet. The line of Ushers staged in front of the angled benches lifted their arms during the final measures of “Science Fiction” to create a marriage arch Brad and Janet would run

through for their scene. This established the location of the wedding Brad and Janet were attending.

(See also APPENDIX B for blocking notes)

“Damn It, Janet”

For this number, I wanted to capture the cheesiness of the lyrics of the song. Brad and Janet were given corny choreography to reflect the words they were singing. For example, as Brad sang “...the future is ours so let’s plan it...” he crossed stage right with three slow steps and then placed his left fist on hip and pointed up with his right hand, a la “Eureka!” As he sang “...I’ve one thing to say and that’s damn it, Janet...” he made a quick cross back to Janet and did an “aw shucks” arm across his body on the phrase “damn it.” One might compare this kind of staging to the melodramatic staging found in early operetta as well as in silent films. I had a lot of fun creating movements for these two characters.

Taking a cue from *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, the Ushers were present at the wedding scene and sang the background vocals for the song. They maintained their outcast attitude for most of the song – I sometimes described their attitude as a slight disinterest. But I also had them join in and poke fun at the cheesiness of the characters of Brad and Janet, encouraging the hilarity of this funny love song. During Brad’s presentation of the engagement ring to Janet, the Ushers crowded around the couple and gleefully encouraged the proposal. The Usher’s framing of the squeaky

clean couple continued through Brad's singing "J-A-N-E-T I love you so" (9). As the song moved into Janet's verse, the Ushers returned to their previous joyless state. For the rest of the song, the Ushers would move in and out of their tongue-in-cheek conjoining of Brad and Janet's exuberance.

The Ushers were not given a lot of big movement. They understood the focus needed to be on Brad and Janet. As much as was possible, the Ushers were staged to give Brad and Janet free rein of the stage. Throughout the song, I gave Brad and Janet moments where there would almost be a kiss but Brad would jump into his next verse. They ultimately kissed on the final bump of the music. As they sang their final notes and moved in for the kiss, I moved the Ushers into an arch up stage of them that filled the stage and choreographed a contagion of arm positions that would simulate Brad and Janet's own wedding trestle.

(See also APPENDIX C for blocking notes)

"Sweet Transvestite"

The introduction music for Frank's first song begins during the dialogue that follows "Time Warp." Janet wants to get away from these strange people while Brad simply wants to get to a phone and call for help. They're completely unaware that the Transylvanians are charged with excitement at the expected entrance of their leader, Frank 'n Furter.

Frank's entrance is very important and audiences familiar with the show and the film are anticipatory about where Frank's entrance may occur – on the stage or elsewhere in the theatre. In the beginning, we gave the actor several entrance options and allowed him to play with all of them. Due to audience sightlines and the practicality of utilizing the performance space fluidly, we settled on one entrance from the upstage platform stage right. He was able to enter just before speaking and get to the stage level at a comfortable pace. But to keep the audience guessing we had the Ushers look about the space as if they didn't know where their leader might appear either.

What was especially fun in the staging of this number was being able to allow the actor freedom to play with the space. I would simply point him to areas I would like him to get to for specific sections of the song and let him play with getting there of his own accord. I trusted his abilities and he did not disappoint. I did give him thematic choreography for the chorus of the song and had fun with infusing steps that were similar to those I had seen at drag shows. The choreography given him was not meant to effuse a feminine mystique, as drag queens do, but to pay homage to that type of performance while maintaining his masculine essence. He was also encouraged to travel from one section of the song to another using a walk that contained a lot of hip movement – much like a Las Vegas showgirl. Again, this would be done without presenting a fully feminine character.

Our approach to the character of Frank 'n Furter was meant to convey a sexual ambiguity. Tim Curry was certainly able to capture this with his portrayal of Frank 'n

Furter and I believe it is important to follow suit. As actors strive to follow suit, some may think their performance an attempt at copying Tim Curry. But I believe he set a standard for the portrayal of Frank 'n Furter that must be acknowledged. It is still possible to use an essence of Curry's performance without presenting a carbon copy. What I believe is brilliant about this number is Frank 'n Furter's taking charge of the stage and capturing everyone's attention with the power he exudes. He introduces himself to the audience as well as Brad and Janet, exchanges a little banter with Brad, and delights in a spectacular exit. It was my goal to have Frank leave Brad, Janet and the audience a little breathless. I think he succeeded.

"Sweet Transvestite" introduced the Tranny Trio that Kip Taisey had infused into the musical score. I have performed in a number of revue shows for theme parks and cruise ships, and have assistant directed a production of *Beehive*, so I was thrilled with featuring these ladies. I charged them with having a flirty sexuality while also shining in their musical sections, but I gave them choreography that would enhance Frank's performance and establish them as the *Rocky Horror* specialty act. They would become the castle's special backup vocalists and would have an essence of their own. I tried to impart upon them an image of girl groups such as The Supremes, The Shirelles and the featured trio of women in the musical *Dreamgirls*.

(See also APPENDIX D for blocking notes)

“The Sword of Damocles”

This scene was a delight to put on the stage especially considering the look of some of the costumes. Frank ‘n Furter’s lab coat was no ordinary plain lab coat but was constructed out of blue pleather material, and Columbia and Magenta served as Frank’s assistants in black pleather mini-dresses with aprons imprinted with red crosses. These costumes gave a nod to the MTV feel of the show. We had Rocky wrapped like a mummy as in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, but the reveal of his body was updated by making the wrapping “ripaway.”

For the song, I directed Rocky to make a slow transition into being comfortable with this new body. His ability to move fluidly would grow with the song and he would be energized by the encouragement of the Ushers. I merely instructed the actor to play with the open stage space and to afford his reactions to these new surroundings and its inhabitants.

The Ushers would become immediate fans of Rocky and would create a music video of sorts with their vocal responses and choreography. Kip Taisey’s arrangement of the music lists “Sword of Damocles” as a Gospel Revival. The choreography had the feel of a Southern Baptist tent revival meeting along with the gleeful exuberance of popular uptempo songs from the 1950’s. The 1950’s influence was borne out of the Usher’s background vocals: “Sha-la-la-la that ain’t no crime! Sha-la-la-la that ain’t no crime” (23)! This song is another occurrence of the music energizing the Ushers. Their excitement is intensified by enthusiasm over Frank’s creation. I wanted the Usher’s

inclusion in “Sword of Damocles” to build, so the first vocals of the chorus and the choreography were given to a small group of Ushers stage right. With the repeat of this line, the rest of the Ushers joined in. As Rocky moved into the next verse, the Ushers started to gather closer into him just upstage. This is when the number became its own music video.

We paid homage to the direction taken by Tim Curry’s Frank ‘n Furter in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. Our Frank was overtaken by the excitement as well, though he couldn’t seem to keep up with Rocky during “Sword of Damocles.” I allowed the actor playing Frank to find moments to chase after his new creation. His careful attention to producing these slapstick moments fit in with the choreography perfectly. He even found moments to include Riff Raff who seemed to get in the way at just the right moment. They played off one another very well.

The Gospel Revival feel of the number really came across during the final repeat of the Usher’s chorus. I staged the Ushers to run to the steps on the center platform to form their own gospel choir. Handclaps and arm movements were given to them to perform to amplify the feeling of being at a tent revival meeting. Also at this moment, a painting of Rocky was flown in upstage of the Ushers bringing us to the church of Rocky.

“Sword of Damocles” is one of the few moments in the show when Frank ‘n Furter actually appears to have lost control of his cult following. There are few of these but he always quickly purports his control over the Transylvanians. The moving of the

Ushers onto the steps of the center platform opened up the stage and allowed Frank to move in and finally take hold of Rocky, his creation.

(See also APPENDIX E for blocking notes)

“Charles Atlas”

The many levels of the “Charles Atlas” song made it a fascinating number to stage. As it is originally written, Frank ‘n Furter is extolling the virtues of his intelligence and his abilities while truly admiring his own brilliance and his new boy toy. Kip Taisey added hums to the Usher’s background vocals creating another gospel arch to Frank’s own self-importance. There were also playful crescendos in the Usher’s vocals causing Frank to lose track of his thoughts. This added comedic touches to this already enchanting number.

Frank’s ode to Rocky is especially comedic in its vaudevillian undertones. Rocky becomes the straight man as it were, making Frank look silly by wandering off to different characters on the stage as Frank aggrandizes his own abilities. “Charles Atlas” required staging rather than choreography and I was able to give Frank and Rocky parameters with which to work without guiding them through step by step. There were moments I directed them to be in certain parts of the stage, staged a little bit of choreography, and suggested portions of their interaction but I was able to give them freedom to explore their relationship to each other throughout the song. The Ushers were dispersed around the stage as audience to Frank’s effusion.

(See also APPENDIX F for blocking notes)

“Whatever Happened to Saturday Night”

Frank ‘n Furter’s joy is abruptly interrupted by the arrival/revival of Eddie. Eddie’s stardom among the Usher’s presents a second moment of Frank losing control of his little cult. The Ushers are blinded by their love for Eddie and his music. The arrangement of the music provides a 50’s Rock/Gospel Revival feel and Kip and I discussed the possibility of using tambourines somewhere in this song. For the MTV generation I wanted to establish the character of Eddie as a true rock star. In our production, he made a grand entrance by popping out of a trap door in the center platform. The Ushers and Columbia immediately form a mosh pit all around him. The mosh pit allowed the audience to quickly give their attention to this new character. And the energy of the reaction by Columbia and the Ushers spilled over into the theatre.

Eddie remained on top of the center platform (after closing the trap door) for the first verse as he was cheered on by the Ushers and worshipped by Columbia. As the music moved into the chorus of “Whatever Happened to Saturday Night,” the Ushers dispersed to all areas of the stage. The energizing effect of Eddie’s presence would spur them into a joyous dance.

I wanted the choreography to have an essence of current dance trends as well as give a salute to the Gospel Revival. Many of the dance steps contained sharp movements attune to the strong downbeats of the instrumental music. There also

existed a section of jumps with feet together and arms pumping to the sky, as a revival salute to the heavens. While the Ushers were lost in their dance Eddie moved to the edge of the stage to become the rock star for the audience. The Ushers were then his back up dancers for this portion of the chorus.

As the music moved into the next verse, I opened the middle of the stage for Eddie. The rest of the characters surrounded him and performed upper body choreography that was suggestive of ritualistic movement. I wanted this to further suggest their admiration for Eddie. Their background vocals continued the 50's Rock feel while their choreography captured the Gospel Revival. The staging and movements were meant to continue the existing energy and maintain the focus on Eddie.

I utilized the lyrics at the end of this section as well as the musical movement to the chorus repeat to get the Ushers and the rest of the cast up on their feet and dancing. The Ushers, Columbia, Magenta, Riff Raff, The Narrator, Slave Boys, Brad and Janet ran to fill the stage as Eddie sang "...and you felt pretty good, 'cuz you really had a good time" (26). Twelve of the Ushers grabbed tambourines flown in over the lip of the stage as they ran to their next position. The repeat of the chorus carried the number into a full Gospel Revival celebration.

As much as popular music is marketed via music videos so too has gospel music found a video market. I really wanted this final section of the song to live as a sort of exuberant gospel video. Eddie, its star, performed his heart out downstage center.

Two groups of Ushers with their tambourines were celebrating with dance and percussive accents to the music stage left and stage right. The Slave Boys were featured just upstage of Eddie with pirouettes and kicks. Riff Raff, Magenta, the Narrator, Brad and Janet joined another group of Ushers performing their own ritual of 'praise' steps upstage of the Slave Boys and on the center platform.

I allowed the actor playing Eddie to really explore his performance as the rock star. The only direction I gave him concerned being on the platform for the first verse, moving to the edge of the stage for the first chorus, taking control of center stage for the second verse and really selling it again at the edge of the stage for the final chorus. From there, he took control of the song and became the rock star that Eddie is and he and Columbia found moments where they could lose themselves in their hunger for each other.

To continue the Gospel feel of the number, Kip Taisey incorporated a tag at the end of the number. Eddie's song finishes as he is chased offstage by Frank wielding an axe. I instructed the Ushers to hold their position and keep the glee in their eyes as if they were oblivious to the situation at hand. I made this decision primarily to maintain focus on Frank's chasing of Eddie. Had there been immediate chaos from everyone the audience may not have caught on to the danger Eddie faced. After Eddie and Frank exit, we hear screams from off stage left. Kip humorously added an "amen" tag to the end of the song for the Ushers to sing – conducted by Brad. Then Frank returned wearing a blood splattered version of his lab coat. (note: The "amen" tag also added

time for the bloodying of the lab coat).

(See also APPENDIX G for blocking notes)

“Charles Atlas Reprise”

Frank ‘n Furter must act out to regain control of the castle. His chopping up of Eddie clarifies for the Transylvanians who is really in charge. The staging of “Charles Atlas Reprise” was as seamless as “Charles Atlas.” In the song, Frank is reasserting his position as leader and reclaiming the attention of the Transylvanians, Brad and Janet.

The Tranny Trio reappeared in the “Charles Atlas Reprise” to provide backup vocals to Frank’s testament. For me their appearance amplified Frank’s true control over his flock. Though the Ushers can get sidetracked by their excitement for other things (i.e. Eddie), they always come back to Frank ‘n Furter.

“Charles Atlas Reprise” ends with the wedding of Frank and Rocky. I staged the cast around the center platform as if they were attending the wedding and gave Frank and Rocky a center aisle through which to exit. This irreverent chapel was framed by the Slave Boys who stood in as altar boys, though their candles were extending out of the top of their shorts. Brad caught the bouquet of flowers thrown by Frank (an indication of things to come?), though he presented the bouquet to a sulking Janet. I live to incorporate a tongue-in-cheek cheesiness to scenes where it can drop in appropriate humor. As Frank and Rocky ascended the stairs toward their exit, I staged

the remaining onstage characters to do a slow wave back and forth in time with the music and in unison.

(See also APPENDIX H for blocking notes)

“Touch-A Touch Me”

Kip Taisey and I both had ideas for this number that would utilize some of the Ushers in their capacity as the Greek Chorus. Though Magenta and Columbia would continue to observe the happenings between Janet and Riff Raff, the Tranny Trio would sing the background vocals for the song. And I wanted to include three couples dancing in shadow on the center platform (two male-female couples and one male-male couple). Their choreography would mirror the fantasies that were playing in Janet’s imagination. I chose to include a male-male couple because we do not always know what fantasies are playing around the heads of others. The male-male couple also opened up the possibilities induced by the sexual overtones of *Rocky Horror’s* script.

The Tranny Trio made a special appearance toward the beginning of the song to sing the “More! More! More!” background vocals (33). They then slinked off the stage to allow focus to Janet’s continued story. The three couples were staged to enter up to the top of the center platform on “...thrill me chill me fulfill me” (33).

The couples were to be lit very sparingly to allow attention to Janet and Rocky. Their choreography existed as Janet’s fantasies and they started dancing at “...then if anything grows” (33). The first dance was lyrical in nature to suggest the romantic love

Janet has known. As Janet got further into her story and a little more aggressive the choreography moved into the feel of an Apache. Finally, the couples performed choreography much like Janet was doing with Rocky on the gurney. Because Janet sings “touch-a touch-a touch-a touch me...I want to be dirty” (33), I gave the three couples some raw choreography. The steps included a lot of sexual innuendo as well as slaps, caresses and hair pulling. This rawness from Janet’s fantasy did finally come to life in her own staging and choreography.

The Tranny Trio reappeared in the lab stage left and the ladies pushed the gurney onto the stage for Janet and Rocky to use as a bed. The ladies then retreated into the doorway of the lab and used it as their own proscenium stage while they sang background vocals for “Touch-A Touch Me.” It may seem their appearance would detract from the action between Janet and Rocky, but their choreography was meant to frame the action between Janet and Rocky. They’re again taking on their roles as the girl group specialty – the castle’s own specialty act.

Without seeing a performance of the number, it may seem too much was happening around the stage to pay proper focus to Janet. I must reiterate that the three couples were dancing in shadow and were meant to be living in Janet’s fantasies. The Tranny Trio was fulfilling their duty as Frank’s specialty act and existed solely to support Janet’s singing of the song.

The actress playing Janet was given simplistic choreography to complement her sexual awakening. She used her own body and Rocky’s body to project the story of the

song. I encouraged the actor playing Rocky to take a while to understand what Janet was trying to tell him. I allowed her to play a little with what she was given and nothing could have deterred attention from her performance. The telling of her story matured as she portrayed the blossoming of the character of Janet. Ultimately, her sexual hunger mesmerized the character of Rocky. The final bump of the music was accentuated by a pelvic thrust from Janet as well as three of the six dancers upstage who were straddling their partners.

I wanted this number to have a hallucinatory feel. The eyes of the audience sometimes couldn't believe what they saw just as Janet couldn't believe what was happening to her. I think this was achieved without losing Janet's predicament.

(See also APPENDIX I for blocking notes)

“Once in a While”

As much as the Ushers became a part of “Touch-A Touch Me,” inferring that no one can truly have a private moment in Frank ‘n Furter’s castle, so the Slave Boys became part of “Once in a While.” Initially, this song was strictly approached from the gospel feel of Kip Taisey’s arrangement. Previous arrangements of the song included vocals from the ensemble but never a full choral sound with solid harmonies. Kip added vocals for the Ushers at an earlier point in the song than had been previously been present.

For staging purposes, the song began with Brad alone onstage. His lyrics are reflective, and he is questioning his relationship with Janet. There is an awakening to truth for him in this song and the gospel vocals created by Kip interjected a celestial feeling to this awakening. The Ushers were directed to enter from the two doors on either side of the rear of the theatre and to walk down the aisles as a celestial choir would enter a chapel. They stood along the walls on either side of the audience and supported Brad's testimony with their harmonies.

Referring back to the inclusion of the Slave Boys into the scene, in rehearsal I played with the idea of putting them on the steps of the center platform with Brad, to serve as his confidantes. I wanted to see what might occur if he had someone to tell his tale to. Earl and I agreed that it worked for the scene and the actor playing Brad seemed happy to have the boys to play off. Later, they would become a part of the Usher's gospel choir.

For most of the song, Brad was allowed to utilize the stage to share his tale with all of the audience. The beginning of his final verse begins with "...and that's all the time that it takes" (35). With this final push of the music the Ushers crossed onto the stage and moved into position upstage of Brad. They were placed around and on the center platform, up the two diagonal stair units and along the front of the rear platform. Again they acted as a gospel choir and impacted the emotion of "Once in a While" with their vocals. The song ended with the lights focusing on Brad allowing him to pronounce his realization: "I should have known" (35).

“Once in a While” was cut from the film version of *The Rocky Horror Show*. I believe it has a rightful place in any production. It provides a journey for the character of Brad as “Touch-A Touch Me” portrays a journey for Janet. Kip Taisey’s arrangement gave a spark to the song I believe adds strength to the character of Brad. (See also APPENDIX J for blocking notes)

“Eddie’s Teddy”

As was previously acknowledged, the Broadway revival of *The Rocky Horror Show* cast the role of Dr. Scott with an actress. But the revival cast’s Dr. Scott was still portrayed as a man. During casting for UCF’s production of *The Rocky Horror Show* both male and female actors were seen at the callback auditions for the role of Dr. Scott. During those auditions Kip had the actors play around with the music and give it a new tilt when and where they could. Eventually, the females were encouraged to perform portions of the song as if they were opera divas. This playing around allowed our production to bring the audience a completely new Dr. Scott. The role would be played by a female and Dr. Scott would become Eddie’s aunt rather than his uncle. There was a simple switching of pronouns within the script’s dialogue, and “Eddie’s Teddy” would be sung with a feminine voice switching back and forth from a belt quality to a diva soprano.

The actress utilized her comedic talents and vocal abilities to bring about a tour de force performance of “Eddie’s Teddy.” For direction, I gave her blocking for her

interaction with other characters and a few suggestions for bits to add to the acting.

The two suggestions I gave her were to push up on the armrests of the wheelchair for one of the high notes (intimating the strength it takes to sing that high) and I added to a bit she worked out with the band. She would pretend to lose her pitch going into the end of the song and would ask the accompanist to plunk her note. After he plunked it, she would thank him in her Dr. Scott voice. I suggested she try using “danke schoen” rather than “thank you.” The rest of the comedy was fully hers.

She and I would have discussions about the song and what tact she should take with the Transylvanians surrounding her. She was able to wield her strength as a person with the flick of a switch on her wheelchair. We also added a bicycle horn to the side of one of the armrests for her to use when she needed someone’s attention. The horn provided some wonderful gags. When the Narrator interrupted Dr. Scott’s story for the second time with “he was a low down cheap little punk” (38), I encouraged Dr. Scott to have a strong reaction. Dr. Scott’s plosive “Shut the fuck up!” did the trick and proved highly entertaining to the audience. This song was another instance of my being able to let the actor go wild with her imagination and trust that what would be created required little help from me. The actor was available for any suggestions I had.

For “Eddie’s Teddy,” the Ushers were scattered about the stage entranced by the strangeness of this person who had invaded Frank’s castle. I directed them to be inquisitive about Dr. Scott and the choreography for their choral interpolations would portray how they’d been drawn into her tale. The ensemble’s singing of the chorus was

staged as a very slow rise to standing with all eyes upon Dr. Scott. After the slow rise they would bend quickly forward toward Dr. Scott on “with a switch blade knife” (38), coming back to a standing position on Frank’s “what a guy” (38).

Columbia’s verse of the song was staged as a handing over of space from Dr. Scott to Columbia. Columbia sang her verse toward Dr. Scott but moved into center and then backed away at the end with her signature tap shoes working frantically. Dr. Scott then moved back to center stage for the reading of her letter from Eddie. Everyone else onstage was highly interested on what the letter had to say. I thought it would be a fun visual to bring Eddie onto the stage (stage right diagonal stair unit) to mime the words that Dr. Scott was singing. Eddie was able to strengthen the message of the words in his note.

In awe of what the note said, the ensemble returned to the chorus section with a little more intensity than before but with the same choreography. To build even further on the next repeat of the chorus, I gave everyone bigger choreography. As I’ve said before, I like to put in little bits of appropriate cheesiness to some choreography, and this time I paid respect to a few beats of choreography from *A Chorus Line*. This got the actors moving more and gave a great intensity to the lyrics of the chorus.

The construction of the end of the song was given a twist that would again highlight the voice of the actress playing Dr. Scott. As written, the lines appear as:

FRANK
What a guy

DR. SCOTT
Makes you cry

COLUMBIA
And I did
(39)

For the UCF production, Dr. Scott and Columbia switched lyrics. This didn't confuse the meaning of the song as Dr. Scott could have cried over Eddie just as easily as Columbia. The last repeat of Dr. Scott's "and I did" was comically stretched out using operatic vocalizing.

The multiple levels of this song and our decisions on direction made it one of my favorite numbers to rehearse. The action in the song grew a lot during the rehearsal process and found a solid base before the first performance. There was some tweaking of the choreography before the show opened, because my nod to *A Chorus Line* was a little longer than it needed to be. We ended up using a very short and quick section of those steps to keep the effect.

(See also APPENDIX K for blocking notes)

“Planet Schmanet”

Once again, Frank ‘n Furter finds himself reasserting his authority. His plan to go on with the Floor Show is destined and “Planet Schmanet” serves as a warning to those who would question his power. For me, this song primarily called for straightforward staging while allowing Frank to prance about the stage and poke fun at his uninvited guests. I knew the actor playing Frank was quite capable of utilizing his character’s attitude to move amongst Brad, Janet and Dr. Scott with the required flair. I provided a framework of movement for him to play out that would instill in each of them the right amount of uneasiness – feeling Janet up and down, mocking Brad, and giving Dr. Scott a special lap dance. I decided to have Columbia and Magenta join in the fun by recreating some of Janet’s choreography from “Touch-A Touch Me” with Frank for the lyrics “You’d better wise up, Janet Weiss/You’d better wise up/Build your thighs up/You’d better wise up” (42). This would prompt Janet’s elongated shouting of “Stop” (42). The Ushers would chime into the frivolity with a repeated mocking echo of Brad’s “You’re a hot dog but you’d better not try to hurt her, Frank Furter” (43). I directed them not only to echo his line with mocking vocals but also to act out playful versions of Brad’s threatening fists that flailed in the air toward Frank ‘n Furter.

The rest of the song gives Frank and his minions the chance to unfreeze the uninvited guests and put them in a trance-like state with the sonic transducer gun. Brad, Janet, Dr. Scott and even Rocky would be taken away in preparation for the Floor Show. The stage directions in the script direct Columbia to take the guests off the

stage. We decided to let the Slave Boys perform this task, as this would allow Columbia to begin to seethe in the calamity of Frank's prowess. The Slave Boys would again be present as members on the fringe of Frank's cult. By the end of the number Frank would again find happiness in his ability to control others.

(See also APPENDIX L for blocking notes)

"The Floor Show"

To me, this number had to be spectacular without outshining the rest of the show. I kept in mind that it was a number that Frank would have directed. In discussions with Earl, it was decided that the Slave Boys would serve as backup dancers for all of the soloists. This would instill a rock concert or music video feel into the number. The choreography and look of the number would have an essence of the styles used for the music video of the 2001 recording of the song "Lady Marmalade." I wanted the movement to ooze with sexuality and attitude (even Brad's awkward attempt at being sexy). The costumes paid homage to the look of the costumes appearing in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* but were given an update with neon boning and the appearance of a little more skin.

My initial staging for the soloists had them rising up out of Eddie's trapdoor, aided by the Slave Boys. I later learned that there would be a curtain flown in before the number that covered much of the center platform. The soloists still entered on the center platform but were revealed by two stagehands paging the curtain open for them.

This actually worked more fluidly, and the feel of the Floor Show was more theatrical.

I brought the benches used in “Science Fiction” back onto the stage to serve as seating for the Ushers stage right and stage left. They would have special onstage seating. As the curtain rose for Frank’s reveal, I wanted him to be greeted with aplomb by having the Ushers rise from their seats and give him a slow motion standing ovation. When the curtain was raised, the Slave Boys were also discovered feeding Frank grapes and fanning him as he reclined on a cushioned chaise.

For Frank’s solo, I wanted there to be as little movement as possible to maintain a central focus that would allow him to draw in attention from the furthest corners of the theatre. At times, he would acknowledge the audience of Ushers, but I wanted him to sing from the heart and radiate in his passion. The minimal movement also kept him wrapped in a beautiful dressing gown trimmed with feathers. The coverage needed to be maintained as he would reveal what was underneath later. I staged Frank to cross down a few of the stairs on the center platform before beginning the “don’t dream it, be it” (47) section of the song. From this vantage point, he could call Brad, Janet, Rocky and Columbia to him. The repeated chanting of this theme would draw these characters into Frank’s ‘circle of love’ and they would get caught up in caressing each other. The Slave Boys were included here as well but soon moved down to help Dr. Scott with her “Floor Show” transformation. In addition to Frank’s ‘love circle’ center stage, the groups of Ushers on either side of the stage were enjoying circles of their very own.

Many discussions about Dr. Scott's transformation helped develop what eventually appeared on the stage. For staging purposes, we mapped out a plan for the Slave Boys to aid Dr. Scott in her transformation. Though the "don't dream it, be it" phrase might be considered the source of Dr. Scott's healing moment, I allowed the Slave Boys to feign magical powers of their own. They would also strip Dr. Scott of her outer clothing. Dr. Scott in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* appears in costume much like that of the rest of the "Floor Show" players. The costumer for the UCF production chose to reveal Dr. Scott in her pink panties and bra that were trimmed with black lace. I thought it was a brilliant idea. I was having a discussion with the actress who played Dr. Scott one day, and we joked around with the idea that she could also rise up en pointe after her reveal, as she is a trained ballerina and is comfortable in pointe shoes. I came back to her a couple of days later and we put that into the show as well as a bourree across the stage as she sang during her transformation.

The hedonism of the "don't dream it, be it" section would be interrupted by Frank 'n Furter's explosive switch into "Wild and Untamed Thing." For me, this is the moment Frank finds ecstasy in his "Floor Show." He has captured everyone in his spell and it's time for an all-out celebration. Frank would take center stage for this solo introduction to "Wild and Untamed Thing," and I lined Rocky, Janet, Dr. Scott, Brad and Columbia up stage of him to perform simplistic and stale choreography with simulated excitement. But Frank's energy would overtake everyone onstage, and they would join him by spreading around the stage, joining in the repeats of the verse and copying the

choreography he performed. Again, I gave the dancers names for some of the steps to make them aware of the style I was going for. Some of the “Wild and Untamed” choreography was referred to as the “N Sync” section, paying homage to these well-known pop icons. For the final repeat of the verse, I blocked some of the Ushers to run into the aisles of the theatre to perform the steps with an even bigger energy. Some of the choreography was also altered to open the dancers even more. Frank’s party is abruptly halted by the entrance of Riff Raff and Magenta.

(See also APPENDIX M for blocking notes)

“I’m Going Home”

Frank ‘n Furter’s swan song is important to the end of the show. For the character, it is a very serious moment, and I decided to give it over to the actor and include the rest of the cast to support his performance. I staged the number so Frank was seated on one of the benches utilized by the Ushers. The actor playing Frank was directed to begin the song seated, and he could rise with the build of the song. I trusted his acting abilities to inspire delivery of the lyrics. The rest of the cast – sans Riff Raff and Magenta – would gather upstage of Frank to support him with their vocals and subtle choreography. Riff Raff and Magenta climbed to the stage right balcony to listen to Frank’s explanation: “Wait - I can explain!” (48).

Initially, Rocky was staged to retrieve the bench as Frank mentally prepared for the song. Frank ended up getting his own bench for the performances via an

inspirational accident during an understudy rehearsal. The Rocky understudy was not available to retrieve the bench, and the Frank understudy ran to get it himself. Earl and I saw a humorous moment in this retrieval, and I relayed the new blocking to the actor playing the role of Frank. The actor expanded this new blocking to heightened hilarity, and it became an acting bit that enhanced the predicament in which Frank 'n Furter found himself. The music vamped until Frank could pull himself together to begin "I'm Going Home."

The background vocals for the remainder of the cast would build as Frank's delivery built, and I wanted to choreograph in accordance with this build. As Frank began the song, the cast moved in slowly to form a supportive formation upstage of him. When they arrived at their formation, I directed them to slowly turn upstage to form a backdrop for Frank. They would then turn their upper bodies to face him again for their echoing vocals of "I'm goin' home" (48). On the repeat of their vocals, the formation was instructed to turn and face Frank.

As I wanted to reflect the theme of the chorus of "I'm Going Home," the Ushers began a slow 'Marcel Marceau walk' in place during certain sections of the song. The first time they walked, movement only occurred in their lower bodies. When it was repeated, they were directed to add slow shoulder pushes forward (i.e. right step, left shoulder). The additional shoulder reflected the emotion of the buildup of Frank's song. Frank rose on the final build of the song and stood on the bench: "Cards for sorrow, cards for pain...I've seen blue skies..." (49). I wanted the staging of the ensemble

backing him up to reflect the build so I choreographed a heavier moving step and spread them across the stage. One group performed their heavier walk traveling stage left, one group traveled stage right and a center group traveled toward Frank before turning to return to their original positions on the steps of the center platform.

Stylistically, I was pleased how this enhanced the musical build. The heavier steps occurred for a couple of measures, and then Frank's celestial choir returned to the 'Marcel Marceau' walk but this time continuing to move. They were in place for their final repeats of "I'm going home." These vocals were in conjunction with Frank's and filled out the inspiration of the lyrics. It was a beautiful moment in the show and Kip Taisey added to it by having the Usherette vocalize on the final chord – a la gospel choir.

(See also APPENDIX N for blocking notes)

“Science Fiction Reprise”

Arriving at the show's epilogue, Riff Raff and Magenta have blasted the castle back to Transylvania and Frank, Rocky and Columbia have been killed. Brad, Janet and the rest of the Transylvanian's appear lost and depleted. I wanted the musical introduction of this reprise to revitalize them and signify a message of hope for them. As the music began, I directed them to let us see the hope in their faces and to look toward the Usherette for her message. This time, I staged the Usherette to begin the song from a place on the stage right balcony. She would then slide down the available

stripper pole as she traveled back toward her original position in the show. As she sang about Brad and Janet, I staged the Ushers to gather around each of them and welcome them into their fold. Brad and Janet were now welcome to become one of them.

The remainder of the song found the Ushers traveling around the stage much as they did during the show's opening number. By the last note of the music, they were directed to meld into the position they took at the start of the "Science Fiction" opening. Brad and Janet took the place of the door units that appeared in the opening and leaned on the Ushers who had been placed by the door units in the opening number. I was inspired to give Brad and Janet a moment on the last phrase of music. As the music found its ending, Brad and Janet reached out toward each other with their in stage arms and clasped hands on the final chord. A light focused in on this final, hopeful moment. (See also APPENDIX O for blocking notes)

What an amazing experience it was to stage these numbers and work with such an eager cast. There was an energy that permeated the cast and the production team that allowed for a very positive working environment. The production team easily reflected its goals for the show and the cast worked hard to fulfill expectations.

CHAPTER FOUR FROM AUDITIONS TO PERFORMANCE

The task of choreographing the University of Central Florida's production of *The Rocky Horror Show* was the greatest educational experience I incurred as a graduate student. After working as a professional actor for over twenty years, I returned to graduate school to work toward a master of fine arts degree. It was my hope that earning an MFA in musical theatre would enable me to procure a faculty position at a university and expand my theatrical career as a teacher. Graduate level classes enhanced my knowledge of theatre and abilities as a performer but my work as a choreographer would give me better insight into what it meant to impart knowledge to university students. I would use what I knew to teach and direct them and my experiences with them would help me develop a sense of what it meant to be an advisor as well as a fellow artist.

Auditions

I was able to observe actors in two different settings. As choreographer, I led the dance auditions for *The Rocky Horror Show*. UCF dance auditions are very similar to an Actors' Equity Dance Chorus Call audition. Different groups of students are brought into the dance studio at scheduled times to learn a combination of six to eight counts of eight.

Thinking back on all of the dance auditions I attended while living in New York City, I wanted to give them a similar experience. I taught one or two counts of eight at a time and led them through what they had learned a couple of times. At the end of each section, I would ask if there were any questions. If there were no questions, we moved on. When I finished teaching the dance combination, I would have everyone do the combination a couple of times in the large group. For the sake of space, I would then break everyone down into smaller groups and run through the combination a couple more times. I would again ask if there were any questions about the dance combination and I would address the answers for everyone. In New York City, actors learn they should always pay attention when a choreographer is answering a question because he/she may have had the same question. The students who were auditioning were very attentive.

The audition combination was danced to a song by the group INXS that I thought was relative to the music found in *The Rocky Horror Show*. To achieve the style of performance I was looking for, I encouraged the dancers to find a character and perform the dance combination as that character. I had been given similar direction at auditions for the Broadway revival of *La Cage Aux Folles* and for the national tour of *Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*. A great number of the students took hold of this direction and created characters. These characters helped them really sell the dance combination and they were less worried about the technique of the steps. Technique took care of itself.

While I was leading the dance auditions in one room, the director of *The Rocky Horror Show*, as well as the directors of UCF's other Spring productions, was viewing other auditions in another studio. These auditions are very similar to an Actors' Equity EPA audition (Equity Principal Actor). In New York, actors obtain a timeslot within a day to audition for a theatrical company or Broadway show. The structure of the EPA audition allows each actor three to five minutes to present his audition package – whether it be songs or monologues. The UCF auditions are very similar, and I believe they prepare each student well for whatever facet of theatre they go into. The students all prepare an audition package of 16 bars of a song and one or two monologues. They are given three minutes for the audition, and the audition panel is made up of the directors of all shows for the particular semester and some of their assistants. Kip Taisey was able to attend all of these audition sessions, and I stepped into the room when my initial dance auditions were complete.

The callback auditions are also structured very much like professional Equity auditions. I led a general dance callback for all of the actors we wished to see again. The combination was the same as the initial dance audition, except I altered the final two counts of eight. The whole production team was present at this callback audition. In addition to the general callback, we had a callback specifically for those ladies we were considering for the role of Columbia, as well as the two female Ushers who would join her in the tap break of "Time Warp."

For the reading and singing callback auditions, the audition times were broken down by character. Each person called back for a specific role was brought into the room and was taught a section of music to sing for the auditioning panel. Though Equity actors will perform at a callback audition as the sole actor in the audition room, I think it is very helpful for the student actors to all be present in the callback room, as is done at the University of Central Florida. They can certainly learn a lot from their peers, and it sometimes puts the actors more at ease to have friends in the room.

Casting

The casting process can be a daunting task for a grad student who is on the production team. I had known most of the students for over a year and many of them were my friends. But the production team had many discussions about the casting of *Rocky Horror*, and we were all comfortable with the casting decisions that were made. Though students ourselves, Kip Taisey and I were given equally important voices in the casting process.

A valuable lesson I learned during the casting process is how directors on the university level approach the casting of shows for each semester. All students are given fair consideration for each show, and many times an actor will be suitable for casting in more than one of the productions. University of Central Florida directors must then work together to decide which show will be most right for the student. I appreciate this way of casting, because it gives a larger number of students in a sizeable theatre

program the chance to perform in the mainstage shows.

Rehearsal

The rehearsal schedule for *Rocky Horror* was discussed and plotted a few weeks before rehearsal began. I had sketched out ideas for some numbers as inspiration hit during my continuous listening to recordings. With the schedule set, I was pleased to know which numbers needed prompt attention. Dance rehearsals primarily took place three days per week in accordance with my availability to travel from Daytona Beach. Most of the numbers I was responsible for were scheduled in the first two and a half weeks of rehearsal. This required a good deal of focus from the cast but provided ample time to tweak dance numbers or alter them if needed.

“Science Fiction,” “Damnit, Janet,” “Sweet Transvestite,” and “Time Warp” were scheduled for week one. The “Science Fiction Reprise” had also been scheduled for this week, but I wanted to save staging it until later in the rehearsal process. This proved advantageous as the staging of the number grew out of the storyline. I learned a lot during the first week about how to pace myself in the teaching of dance combinations. I also appreciated the fact that a stage manager was on hand during the rehearsals to remind me when a break was needed. I now understood how choreographers can get lost in their work and not realize how much time has passed. I also learned how to utilize a rehearsal space that wasn’t equal to the performance space. Dance numbers were rehearsed in a smaller dance studio while scenes were

being blocked in the larger rehearsal space. As numbers found completion, we were able to switch into the larger rehearsal space to show Earl whatever progress had been made. The cast became very adept at transferring from one space to another.

Week two brought about the staging of “Sword of Damocles,” “Charles Atlas,” “Charles Atlas (reprise),” “Whatever Happened to Saturday Night,” “Touch-A Touch Me,” “Once in A While,” “Eddie’s Teddy,” “Planet Schmanet,” and the “Floor Show.” This was quite an undertaking, and I stretched some of the staging into the next week for clarity. I learned a great deal about scheduling during this week of rehearsal. I spoke with the head of UCF’s dance program about my time crunch and he suggested allowing thirty minutes to an hour for each page of music. That is something I will utilize with future rehearsal schedules.

During the third week of rehearsal, I addressed any sections that seemed unfinished or were not staged. At this point, we were finally able to stage “Science Fiction Reprise.” The progression of the storyline gave impetus to the staging of this number. Brad and Janet were welcomed into the fold of the remaining Transylvanians.

The staging and choreography took shape and started to come to life in the rehearsal studio, though the rehearsal space did not exactly mirror the performance space of the stage. The cast, however, grew into their roles. Ushers discovered and defined who they were in the world of Transylvanians and the leading characters established relationships to one another as well as the Ushers. The makeup of the cast was much like any production, in that the director and choreographer can decipher

which actors might need more directorial guidance than others.

As a bonus, the production was able to move into the performance space earlier than expected. The early move presented ample time to become comfortable in the space and tweak or revise blocking as needed. We were also able to give most of the understudies the chance to rehearse on the set as well. Many of the show's actors would be traveling to the Southeastern Theatre Conference (SETC) and were cleared to be absent from rehearsals (per UCF guidelines). SETC is another educational opportunity for the students and they worked hard to earn the right to audition at this conference.

I tried to be as available to the actors as much as I could outside of rehearsal time, but my living in Daytona Beach to attend my own classes restricted my availability. I let the cast know they could call me on my cell phone with any questions and were free to email me as well. I was also very confident in the ability of the dance captain to answer any questions that arose.

I believe the only deterrent to my staging process stemmed from my inability to attend some of the production meetings. This was no fault of the production team. I had obligations to my classwork and other projects in Daytona Beach and the production stage manager would keep me apprised of any pertinent information from these meetings.

An Unexpected Circumstance

An unforeseen occurrence bolstered my voice in the creative process before UCF's *The Rocky Horror Show* moved into technical rehearsals. The production team had always maintained a collaborative voice, following Earl Weaver, the director. Before technical rehearsals began, his ability to attend rehearsals was interrupted by health complications. When this occurred, he handed the reins over to me and the musical director, Kip Taisey. Of course this made us both a little nervous but I knew we could complete the task and I felt we'd garnered a great deal of respect from the student cast. Earl had always treated me as a co-director and this mentality transferred to the cast.

The opportunity to be the director's voice provided me with a fortuitous educational experience. It would be my duty to complete Earl's vision for UCF's *The Rocky Horror Show*. The final weeks of rehearsal opened my eyes to all of the responsibilities of a director.

A lot of spatial cleaning of the show had already occurred since we were able to move onto the set at such an early stage. When more and more technical aspects of the show were introduced to run-throughs of the show, it was my duty to ensure the actors were still within sightlines, or lit properly, or not upstaged by a set piece. I laughed at myself during one run-through of the show when I suddenly said to myself, "I need to be looking at the lights, too!" These moments of realization are those that tell you you're about to learn some valuable lessons.

From that moment on I was able to keep a keener eye toward many parts of the stage. I was able to continue watching the performances of the actors while jotting down notes about lights, tempos and sound cues. There was a moment of self-doubt when I wondered if the rest of the production team would take my notes and suggestions seriously. Any doubts I had about myself were quickly dispelled when I found out that we'd all been on the same wavelength all along. There was a strong collaborative effort at play to create a stunning show.

The production team worked together to formulate the use of muslin sheets to cover various parts of the set from the top of the show. These sheets helped to reveal set pieces as they were needed – some more surprises for the audience. There were some sound cues that needed to be added for the castle's door knockers, for laser guns and for the slaying of Eddie. Martin Wootton, the sound designer, also suggested other sound effects for Brad and Janet's entrance into the castle as well as a playing of the RKO blips during the "Floor Show" (an homage to *the Rocky Horror Picture Show*). I enjoyed the sound effects inside the castle. A vote had to be taken among the production team concerning the RKO sound effect. It was eventually cut from our show.

The sex scenes between Frank and Janet and Frank and Brad had been blocked upstage of a screen. The actors would be backlit to produce shadows on the screen. It gave a mystery to what was actually happening in the screen and provided some very humorous sights. Initially, they were backlit with white light. During one rehearsal it hit me that perhaps the light needed to have color to further suggest the sex going on in

the bedrooms. We tried many different gel colors over the light and agreed upon a pale red – Frank’s own red light district. I enjoyed imparting this sort of simple suggestion keeping in mind that I knew it would be in accordance with Earl’s vision for the show. I tried to keep him updated with any additions or changes to the show.

I felt like I started to get my “director’s eyes” – if there is such a thing. I wanted the cast to be able to concentrate on their performances without being hindered in any way. Some movement of original blocking was made simply to ensure the actor was aptly framed/not frame with lighting. Brad began singing “Super Heroes” from the stage right balcony. Because of his height and his wearing tall, heeled shoes, the spotlight could not capture all of his face. Eventually, I moved his blocking to the top of the spiral staircase that led up to the stage right balcony. The move put him in better light and he used the center post of the spiral staircase to add drama to what was being sung. I moved Frank ‘n Furter’s initial blocking for the reveal of the bag containing Eddie’s remains. He had been crossing the stage with it behind his back to get close to the mechanism that would freeze Brad, Janet and Dr. Scott. Because the bag was so large, he was unable to hide all of it. So, I moved him to stand beside the ‘freezing’ mechanism and an Usher handed Frank the bag from behind. Then he quickly flung it in front of him at just the right moment.

The final task before opening night was to stage the bows. Due to rehearsal constraints, I staged them later in the process than I’d hoped to. The cast only had a couple of run-throughs of bows before the show opened. Because I wanted to highlight

as many of the featured actors as I could, I requested the company be very quick with their bows because audiences do not like being made to applaud for too long a time. The Ushers began with a collective bow. They were followed by the Usherette, the Narrator with her Slave Boys, Rocky, Dr. Scott, Eddie and Columbia together (out of Eddie's trapdoor), Magenta and Riff Raff, Brad and Janet, and finally Frank 'n Furter. I staged a large number of separate bows, but the cast moved it along and the audiences seemed to enjoy making more noise for their favorites. (see also APPENDIX P for blocking notes)

I felt Earl and I had very similar visions for this production, so the task of standing in for him was not as daunting as one might think. The actors gave Kip and I respectful attention and concentrated on getting the show ready to open. The remaining members of the creative team worked in conjunction to attend to and finalize details. I quickly learned that the other designers valued my opinion as Earl's voice. Earl was available if I had any questions for him. And the team was able to mount a successful production of *The Rocky Horror Show*. Though Earl's departure from the final rehearsals was unfortunate, I cannot lose sight of the invaluable opportunity the show became for me. Some people teach their children to swim by simply throwing them into the water. This was one of the best swims I ever had.

Performances

For every show I've worked on as choreographer or assistant director, I like to thank the cast and crew before the opening night performance. I think of this thank you as a little talk of inspiration – something to further energize them for that first performance. Speaking to the cast and crew of *The Rocky Horror Show* was very important to me, as they had been with me during this very educational experience. I was very confident in the show we had all worked so hard on and could see the lively anticipation in their faces. The excitement of creating art is not something you can share with someone who hasn't experienced it. That night's energizing speech will always be very special for me.

The show opened to a full house and a very excited audience. Earl had written a pre-show speech for the Narrator letting the audience know they were not about to see the movie and encouraged them not to yell responses back at the actors. The pre-show speech worked quite well but I sometimes wonder if it was needed. I was able to see several performances and the audiences seemed not to need to respond as audiences do for *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. The audiences were enrapt with the world of the Transylvanians and responded with laughter and applause.

CHAPTER FIVE *THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW JOURNAL*

November 19, 2006 – Initial UCF Spring Auditions

These auditions were fun. I chose not to use any music from the show for the dance audition. I know some of the students were itching to find out if they would be doing “Time Warp” at the audition. I decided to go with a song that sounded a bit like the show – knowing I could utilize ideas I’d already had about choreography for “Rocky Horror.”

I taught a combination to *Good Times* by INXS and Jimmy Barnes. It was not a long combination, but I decided it should be a little challenging for the students to really get them to push themselves. They did not disappoint. I knew some of them were not strong dancers, but they gave it their all. It’s interesting to note which of the auditioners would grasp onto the specific nuances I would ask of them.

I learned in NYC that the more you pay attention to the choreographer at an audition, the better your chances are. So many dancers only grasp onto the steps that are taught and bring nothing to the combination. At these auditions, I tried to impart to the students that the ‘acting’ of the combination was more important to me than the full technique of the steps. During my last five years in NYC, I heard the same statement made by many well-known choreographers: Thommie Walsh, Cynthia Onrubia, Jerry Mitchell and Wayne Cilento.

After completing the initial dance auditions, I sat in on some of the general monologue and singing auditions. While viewing these auditions, I also glanced at some of the resumes the students handed in. It sort of caught me off guard that many of the students did not know how to create a proper resume. I can understand some of the freshmen not being able to create a proper resume, but some of the upper classmen turned in faulty resumes as well. One of the first lessons taught to professional actors is that they should never include their home address on a resume. Because resumes are handled by so many people, one never knows who may end up with that resume.

November 27, 2006 - UCF Spring Callbacks.

6:30 – 8:00 pm Dance all (except Dr. Scott and Narrator)

From the initial dance call, we put up a list of people to dance for the whole production team. I had everyone perform the same combination as was taught the day before with only slight tweaks. The students were more relaxed at this audition and more of them were able to grasp onto the nuances I was asking for – particularly concerning the acting of the dance. Because there were fewer in this group, we were able to dance them in smaller groups.

8:00 - 9:00 pm Dance Columbias. Singing Dr. Scotts and Narrators

After the initial dance call back, we kept some ladies who were called back for the role of Columbia. There were also extra ladies, as I wanted to add two girls to Columbia's tap break in "Time Warp." For the tap combination, I did use music from the

show (“Time Warp”). I had each of the ladies dance a short tap combination to get an idea of their abilities. Because the character of Columbia is usually envisioned as kooky, I was not concerned that the person playing her be an amazing tap dancer. Luckily, we had a lot of really good tap dancers attend the callback, so there was no concern.

November 28, 2006 – UCF Spring Callbacks

6:30 - Strip

7:00 - 8:00 Ensemble singing “Eddie's Teddy”

8:00 Usherettes sing “Science Fiction”

9:00 Eddies

For all of these callbacks, I merely had to watch as a member of the production team and give my input. At 6:30, all the men who received a callback for Rocky or one of the Slave Boys were asked to come in and strip down to a jockstrap or a thong. At the initial audition, each person was given a questionnaire concerning his/her willingness to appear semi-nude or kissing of the same sex. This kind of questionnaire can also be found in the professional world and all actors appreciate this kind of acknowledgement. The further stripping down to a thong or jockstrap can also be found in the professional world.

After the stripping callback was completed, Kip took over to work ensemble singing. It was fun to sit and watch Kip at work with the ensemble singing. The

students recognized his knowledge of the music and were eager to perform what he asked. Now and again, he had to reiterate what he was looking for because many of the students had spent a great deal of time listening to recordings of the show. It is sometimes difficult to present something new to well-known music, but Kip was able to ask the students to throw away what they had heard of this music before. I believe that once the show goes into rehearsal, he will be able to go further toward the sound he wants.

All of these auditions moved quickly and we were finished shortly after 8:00 p.m. Kips command of the callbacks carried us soundly through the auditions of the Usherettes and the guys called back for the role of Eddie.

November 29, 2006 – UCF Spring Callbacks, *The Rocky Horror Show*

6:30 Brad & Janet

8:00 Riff Raff, Magenta & Columbia

9:00 Frank and Rocky

These groups were all fun to watch. All of the students came in with a lot of energy and a lot of preparation for these auditions. There were some surprises in each group. Sometimes you have to release your preconceived notions about an actor, because you can be surprised. We were confident with our first choices for each of the roles and were very pleased with the possible understudies for each role.

November 30, 2006 – Casting for *The Rocky Horror Show*

Kip and I had been looking forward to the casting meeting. Unfortunately, because we study in Daytona Beach, we missed out on the casting process. The faculty decided to have the casting meeting earlier than initially scheduled as their day freed up at the same time. We understood their choice to go ahead and complete the casting but were still disappointed that we weren't able to be a part of that process.

We were very happy with the students who were cast in *Rocky Horror* – and with a cast list together, we were excited about getting started. There's a lot of work to be done before that first rehearsal in February. Many ideas for the production have already been discussed and I began to envision the cast on the stage – though the layout of the set wasn't complete.

February 3, 2007

The Christmas break has been a busy one. I have not been able to do a great deal of pre-production work, but I have a lot of ideas for our production. During the break, I rehearsed Seaside Music Theater's production of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, rehearsed songs and scene work with two partners in preparation for the ACTF regional conference, and continued preparations for a personal cabaret to be performed during Spring semester.

I have listened to two different recordings of *Rocky Horror* so the music will begin to live in my brain. With constant visits to the recordings, more and more ideas for

choreography jump into my head. It is my intent to make the choreography challenging but not too difficult for the cast. I know the students playing all of the named characters, but I know little about the Ushers (ensemble) – most of them are freshmen and sophomores. I have confidence in their abilities as they brought such enthusiasm to the audition process and were very prepared for callback auditions. Some of them would not identify themselves as dancers, but I trust they will be able to grasp onto whatever I give them. As the rehearsal process is a long one, I know I'll have time to alter anything that doesn't seem to click.

This week, I will tackle as many of the musical numbers as I can, before rehearsals begin. I have a nice framework for many of the numbers and know that a lot of the others will require more staging than choreography. I certainly don't want to over-choreograph the show.

February 12, 2007

First rehearsal for *The Rocky Horror Show* – Meet and greet the production team. Discuss parameters of show, set, costumes, music and choreography. The cast was presented some background of the show by the dramaturgy team. A packet of information was made available for the cast to look at in their spare time. This was followed by a read-through of the show singing along with the 2000 Broadway production CD.

February 15, 2007

First dance rehearsal for *The Rocky Horror Show* – plans were to get through “Time Warp” and “Science Fiction.” Originally, we were going to just work on “Time Warp” but I thought I could get through two numbers in the allotted three hours. We did get through most of “Time Warp” and a little bit of “Science Fiction.” One hurdle in rehearsing both numbers was having to use the 2001 Broadway production CD to run numbers. The musical construction of our show is different from this production. We really needed a recording of the music we will be using. We may have been hindered by the lack of production meetings attended by me and Kip Taisey. Our schedules in Daytona were not cohesive to the schedules of the production team in Orlando.

Working with the students is a great deal like the professional world. For the most part, they listen well. As they’re young, they like to chat with their friends after a section of the choreography is run through. I find it easy to just continue on without stopping to request silence. They all hear me well and catch up with where I am. As time grows late, they do find it harder to hold onto concentration. This is not to say I ever felt like I lost them. They all did a really good job and were eager to learn steps and ask questions. The only thing I know I need to suggest to them is that they start writing down blocking and steps that they feel might prove difficult. During the staging of “Science Fiction,” there was only one actor who had music in hand and was writing down blocking and choreography notes (this was appreciated).

I did find myself losing track of time. I know I appreciate the required Equity breaks. Luckily, I asked when their break was due at about the time it was scheduled. I did, however, ask the cast to run the number one more time before taking the break. They happily obliged.

After the break, we moved into the larger rehearsal space. This was a breath of fresh air, because the dance studio is nowhere near the size of the stage and we needed to alter stage pictures to accommodate the number of cast members. I believe the cast was also relieved to run through the number again in a space that is a closer approximation to the space on the stage. I was also able to watch more of the bigger picture. It's very energizing to watch one's choreographed steps come to life. When working on numbers alone, I try to envision what will become of the steps. I'm happy when the outcome proves to be what I envisioned and sometimes more than I thought it might be.

February 18, 2007

More staging of dance numbers. We finished "Science Fiction." Went on to stage "Damnit Janet" and "Sweet Transvestite." We had time at the end of rehearsal to refresh the cast on "Time Warp." We fit into numbers an ensemble member who had missed previous rehearsals due to conflicts as we had time. She caught on as quickly as she could and did very well. There was a very nice focus, in that we were able to get through this many staged or danced numbers.

February 20, 2007

“Sword of Damocles”

“Charles Atlas”

“Charles Atlas Reprise”

Chatty cast, for the most part, though when I bellowed they jumped to.

Sometimes it took a couple of bellows to get their attention. The scene before the monster reveal wasn't completely blocked, so I went ahead and finished blocking from Earl's work and he was appreciative.

February 22, 2007

7:00 “Whatever Happened to Saturday Night”

8:30 “Touch-A Touch Me”

The rehearsal schedule was altered beginning on this date so I could have more time to teach and clean dance numbers. These two numbers, especially, needed more time for teaching. There's a lot happening during these numbers. I was excited to have different choreography happening at different areas of the stage. What's invigorating is watching the choreography come to life with the whole cast – rather than envisioning what the final product might be. The cast caught on well and was eager to ask questions. As rehearsals progress, I try to keep encouraging them to ask questions about the choreography. I can see some steps take a little longer to grasp. I do not want them to be afraid to ask questions...another cast member may have the same question.

February 25, 2007

2:00 Finish "Touch-A Touch Me"

3:30 "Once in a While," then review all Choreography

7:00 "Eddie's Teddy"/review choreography in order of the show

The chatty cast was spoken to by Earl Weaver. Rehearsals do seem to be affected by the chattiness, but I normally find that I only have to say "Let's go" once and the cast jumps to the ready. They know that once I say "Let's go" I'm going to go ahead and count off to begin the choreography. "Eddie's Teddy" went pretty well. I thought it would not need a great deal of choreography, as the focus should remain on Doctor Scott. But I did realize that on the third repeat of the chorus we needed something happening on the stage. I plan on bringing something to the cast this week. Notes taken during this rehearsal were primarily concerned with paying attention to where focus should be on the stage and defining subtle character moments.

At 8:30 P.M., we began another run-through of all the numbers in the show. This was helpful for all the cast members as the movements began to live in their bodies. Notes from this rehearsal targeted syncopation of choreography by the ensemble and stage formations. I acknowledged that some of the staging would alter as the space on the stage would be more ample than in the rehearsal space.

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

7:00 "Planet Schmanet"

8:30 "Floor Show/I'm Goin' Home"

Tonight, we got through "Planet Schmanet" pretty quickly. Frank 'n Furter is easy to work with and I enjoy the fact that I merely have to give him parameters of what I envision. All the leads are easy to work with. The ushers also did a very nice job in adding to the scene.

The "Floor Show" was fun to put together. Columbia, Rocky, Brad and Janet are already bringing a good energy to their solo. The slave boys are doing well in adding to each solo as backup dancers. I believe lighting will play a big part in this section of the show. I had not discussed Frank 'n Furter's entrance before this but easily adjusted the blocking I had in mind. Doctor Scott's 'healing' is going to be hysterical. I also hadn't an idea of what Earl was envisioning. Again, it was easily adjusted. The primary issue here is to time out Doctor Scott's dialogue and song so it will end before Brad's vocal line.

The cast seemed to have fun learning and performing the choreography for "Wild and Untamed Thing." I believe it's going to look good once we get on the stage and the cast gets used to singing the lyrics and doing the choreography in this uptempo piece. We will need some time with this for cleaning and verifying nuances.

Riff Raff and Magenta were staged to enter on the platform stage right. I asked Earl if they could enter from the back of the house and he approved. I believe their

entering from the back of the house will make the stage pictures and transitions easier. And for my mind, it's sort of a salute to the film version of 'Rocky Horror Show.'

We had just enough time to begin staging "I'm Going Home." I believe finishing this number will not take a great deal of time on Thursday. The cast is doing a Marcel Marceau walk facing upstage – representing Frank's 'going home.'

There were some lapses in focus during the rehearsal and I was more vocal about my concern for this than usual. For the most part, these lapses in focus seem to occur in the same people.

Thursday, March 1, 2007

7:00 Finish "I'm Going Home"

7:45 Stage "Science Fiction Reprise"

8:10 Fix "Once in a While"

8:30 Finish "Eddie's Teddy"

8:50 Change in "Wild and Untamed Thing"

9:00 Run "Hot Patootie"

Tonight's rehearsal went very, very well. The cast members were a little talkative during warm-ups and there were some stragglers who got started late. Before starting the dance rehearsal, I had them all do a breathing exercise with me to bring some focus about. I also encouraged them to create a character background for themselves – if they hadn't already done so. Everyone had great focus for all of rehearsal, which made

everything run more smoothly.

For “I’m Going Home,” I simply needed to add to what they already knew. We continued with the Marcel Marceau motif and then opened up to frame Frank ‘n Furter. After viewing them run through the number a couple of times, I added motions to each section to add to the picture. As they do the ‘walking home’ theme three times, I decided it should build. The first time they do the Marcel Marceau walk facing upstage, I asked them to keep any upper body movement to a minimum. Next, they do the same movement facing downstage. This time I added a shoulder push forward (opposite shoulder to the stepping foot). With the final movement – as the cast opens up the stage – I encouraged them to use more arms in the walking motion.

I treated “Science Fiction Reprise” not only as the finale to the show but also as a welcoming of Brad and Janet into the fold. The cast is brought to life with the musical introduction to the song. They look to the usherette to inspire them. On the lyrics about Brad and Janet, the ushers clump around each and bond with them. Following this bonding moment, the ushers go on to mill around the stage as they did in the opening number. They’re instructed to finish the number in the same position they started the show. Brad and Janet stand in place where the doors appeared in the opening number. Each is draped over a separate usher. On the final chord of music – without looking – they reach across and clasp hands.

Friday, March 2, 2007

7:00 Run-through of whole show

Tonight was our first full run of the show – the first time the show had complete choreography. It was also one of the few times we were able to perform all of the choreography with piano accompaniment rather than with the CD. I was excited to see how things were going to translate.

After this run through, I had a few questions about tempos. I addressed these with the accompanist as well as Kip Taisey. We clarified where I had questions (“Science Fiction,” “Whatever Happened to Saturday Night” and “Wild and Untamed Thing”). For the Ushers, I tried to give a clearer impression of their characterization and how that transfers into the choreography (i.e. filling the music). A few reminders were made about blocking and I encouraged everyone to work on any steps they weren’t confident about outside rehearsal. Some new ideas came into play from this rehearsal as well. At the end of Frank and Rocky’s wedding, I asked one of the male Ushers to run up the stairs and bid the couple an excited farewell. It proved to be a cute bit for the transition into the next scene. For the beginning of “Once in a While,” we tried placing the Slave Boys on either side of Brad to serve as confidantes. Earl and I decided we both liked the idea of it and Rob (Brad) happily worked them into the scene. I realized I also needed to consider the spacing of Rocky, Brad, Janet and Columbia in their frozen state in the middle of “Floor Show.” Janet’s frozen position was also addressed for the sake of being comfortable.

I was very glad to see some things come together. Some of the choreography exudes some unity I'm looking for. Much of the cast is bringing a great energy to the performance. Some are lagging behind. I know we are all excited about moving onto the stage next week. I will be able to get a clearer picture of what works and what doesn't once we fill the stage and have all of the space.

Sunday, March 4, 2007

2:00 pm Music Review with Kip

7:00 pm Choreography Review with Tim

This is the final day of rehearsal in the Tech Center at UCF. We move to the stage on Monday. This show is a little big for the Tech Center, so the whole production staff is itching to get on the stage. We've been blessed with a crew that made quick work of getting the set built.

I arrived at the Tech Center around 3:30 p.m. to have a listen to the music rehearsal. The cast sounded really great, though they still have a problem with keeping focus during rehearsal (chatty bunch). Kip asked for any input I had toward the end of rehearsal. At this time, I spoke to the cast about affording Kip and I the same kind of respect they give to Earl.

When Kip finished doing vocal work sitting down, we put some of the numbers on their feet. Wanted to see how the choreography affected the cast's ability to hold onto fixes Kip made with cut offs, etc. Because the cast members are grasping on to most of

the notes previously given, I am able to point out picky aspects of their performances. It is a nice stage to be at.

We returned at 7:00 pm for my clean-up rehearsal. I made a list of the numbers that needed the most work. I knew it would be a short rehearsal because I was looking forward to doing a lot of cleaning when we got to the stage.

After going over group numbers, I allowed most of the cast to leave. I only kept the three couples from “Touch-A Touch Me,” the tappers from “Time Warp” and the ‘Tranny Trio’ to clean their choreography. So, most of the cast got to leave around 8:20 p.m. The three couples worked very quickly to clean up their choreography and I altered where certain moves occurred – slightly. This seemed to help the couples stay in sync. The ‘Tranny Trio’ did a little better once I explained the kind of ‘attitude’ they needed to have. It appeared they had done some work on their own outside of rehearsal. Finally, I worked with Columbia and the two ladies who join her in the “Time Warp” tap break. Here again, I clarified which steps happened when and made slight alterations in Columbia’s solo break, which made her feel more comfortable with what she was doing.

Monday, March 5, 2007

The first day on the stage! Earl has allotted the first two days of rehearsal this week for my spacing the dance numbers. Since we were both at rehearsal, we went ahead and spaced the whole show – scenes and dance numbers. The first hour was

spent with presentations by the set designer/builders and a walking around of the stage. We also played a little bit on the stripper poles. After that, we got to work. The cast was able to space themselves more easily because there were tape marks on the stage denoting the spacing of the footlights.

I had spoken with Kip about bumping up the tempo for “Science Fiction.” I was able to get him to bump the tempo up to 120. It had been at 116. It may not seem like a lot, but I was happy to get it moving a little more.

As much of the night was spent checking the spacing of numbers, I was unable to take a lot of notes. This evening, we made it up to “Whatever Happened to Saturday Night” (Hot Patootie). For my part, “Time Warp” took the most time looking at and cleaning the spacing. The cast transferred the spacing to the stage very well. I only had to clean up one formation. Some people had strayed from their original blocking. It didn’t take too long and I realized that some of the spacing in the Tech Center could have been confusing because that rehearsal space cannot equal the space afforded on the stage.

For “Sword of Damocles,” I had placed the gurney center stage. We needed to move it more to stage left to account for the wires that will stretch to Rocky when he’s being brought to life. All blocking with problems was easily altered. The only characters who changed much at all were Frank, Rocky, Magenta and Columbia – and this was only for the first part of the song.

Tuesday, March 6, 2007

This evening we continued spacing the show on the set. As the week goes on, we lose more and more of the leads to SETC (Southeastern Theatre Conference). We started the rehearsal with “Hot Patootie.” Primarily, we spent time spreading out the formations to fill the stage. Also, we were able to utilize prop tambourines for the first time. The cast was happy to have them. They were also shown the position of where the tambourines would be flying in. The choreography is beginning to look tighter. I would love to have a little more commitment to the choreography as a whole, but we are missing cast members and I know these students are looking forward to Spring Break.

In “Charles Atlas Reprise,” I still need to see more attitude from the ‘Tranny Trio.’ For “Toucha Touch Me,” we had a gurney available for the ‘Tranny Trio’ to move onto the stage. This helped us all clarify exactly where they needed to move the gurney and what steps it would take to get there. The trio is working more and more on finding their attitude and I really appreciate their enthusiasm.

I had choreographed a little salute to *A Chorus Line* during “Eddie’s Teddy.” I think it’s really funny but I think the grabbing of the hat brim is a little overboard with the salute – to the point of amateurish. I kept the idea of the salute in the beginning of the step but changed the last two counts of eight that are closer to the feeling of the rest of the show. I feel a lot more comfortable with how it now looks.

“Planet Schmanet” was a little difficult to get through because we had a lot of understudies in the rehearsal. The staging of this number is still pretty new, so they

weren't comfortable with doing the correct staging. Primarily, we were able just to get an overall idea of the number. The same was true for "Floor Show." The cast did find they have more stage to cover for the end of their solos, so they can open up the stage for Frank's solo. I had to reiterate that the slow motion section needs to be s-l-o-w and there should be no sound from the Ushers at that point – not even clapping. When I initially staged "Wild and Untamed Thing," I did not know the curtain would be in – covering much of the stage – so I had to alter the staging of the Ushers. It didn't take long to alter as I moved six of the Ushers into the house on the stairs.

"I'm Going Home" is looking better and better. The cast is getting the idea of the Marcel Marceau walk and it's looking really good – upstage of Frank. A fun idea was inspired tonight. I had been having Rocky grab the bench for Frank to sit on and sing "I'm Going Home." There really wasn't a Rocky available tonight so Matt, Frank's understudy, ran and got it himself. Earl and I decided to have Rocky tell Frank to get it himself when asked and Frank would have to run upstage quickly to retrieve – funny stuff.

"Science Fiction Reprise" will do well as it was originally staged. We spent a little time letting Samantha slide down the stripper pole the other day. She's already gallantly sliding down the pole while continuing to sing. As she does in the opening, she's taking charge of the stage and selling the message well. The cast members are welcoming Brad and Janet into the fold better and I still love the moment of Brad and Janet clasping hands on the final chord.

Thursday, March 8, 2007

Earl spent Wednesday evening doing scene work with all of the understudies so I was not needed. For this evening, there was a run-through of the show scheduled. Most of the lead roles were performed by understudies so it was a little difficult to get an idea of the whole picture. The understudies only performed the character – not stepping in as their Usher character when they could.

It was eye-opening to see which of the understudies was prepared. Earl and I agreed that only a few of them would be ready to perform if needed. I thought they would be more prepared – as a whole – because they had been meeting before rehearsals, starting in February, to do their own rehearsing of scenes. Many of them had also approached me, previously, to ask questions about blocking.

Sunday, March 18, 2007

We're jumping back into rehearsal with a very interesting situation. The previous week was Spring Break for UCF, so everyone has been away from the momentum of rehearsals. The week before Spring Break was also hampered by the absence of many of our leads, who were participating in the Southeastern Theatre Conference. In addition to these factors, I received a call from Earl Weaver. He let me know he would be having back surgery in the coming week and would be out of commission for several weeks. With Earl being out of commission, Kip Taisey and I would see the show through the rest of rehearsals up to opening.

I wasn't apprehensive about the task now at hand, but I was worried about the amount of traveling we'd be doing in the next couple of weeks and being able to complete all of my classwork. I was kind of excited about the upcoming tech week. I felt comfortable I knew the vision Earl had for the show.

The first day back was a sitzprobe. We gathered at the theatre and Kate Ingram, the department's artistic director, let the cast know what was happening with Earl and that Kip and I would guide the show the rest of the way. The sitzprobe went well and I sensed the cast was still excited about opening the show and working on the stage.

Monday, March 19, 2007

At 7:00, we gathered and went quickly through the show to remind everyone of the spacing and fix anything that needed attending to. I took some time to work with the Narrator and the Slave Boys on the curtain speech. We adjusted some of their original blocking and I encouraged Amanda to bump up the energy in the speech.

Because of Spring Break some numbers and scenes were a little rusty, but the cast still did a nice job in the run-through. There were moments when we needed to clarify when movements occurred, for the Ushers – specifically, comparing stage right to stage left. I began to recognize moments in the show that we wanted for different lighting or a sound effect. The sound designer and I decided on a loud booming sound for the castle's door knocker. At this same moment, George Jackson (lighting designer) and I discussed a brighter highlighting of the castle doors. Aside from picky notes

concerning choreography, I addressed moments where the entrance of a character who was speaking might be unseen by portions of the audience. These moments were fixed. During rehearsals the week before Spring Break, understudies were charged with apprising their characters of altered choreography in “Eddie’s Teddy.” The task was not completed by them so we addressed the new steps at the end of rehearsal. Again, it was a good run-through. The cast only needed reminders here and there about forgotten nuances.

Tuesday, March 20, 2007

At 7:00 p.m., we started rehearsal with a quick cleaning of spots in the choreography. This was followed with a run-through. The cast members are really beginning to live in their characters. Notes taken from the run-through were particular to choreographic syncopation, feeding energy to the audience and tweaking of staging for clarification of the story. I also paid attention to diction and addressed any lines that may not have been understood by the audience. I viewed the run through the eyes of an audience member and found that I wanted to be more included in the action. Therefore, I gave some of the characters ideas for lines that could be brought out to the audience. *The Rocky Horror Show* has a tongue-in-cheek quality that makes the audience want to be included in ‘the joke.’ I also addressed moments in songs when the Ushers need to be moved by the underscoring – the songs are a part of the spell in which Frank ‘n Furter has captured them.

Wednesday, March 21, 2007

Tonight was a stumble through with sound for the first time. There were definitely a number of issues with microphone cues and the actors, but it was the first time through with sound. This night, I also began taking more notes for sound and lights.

“Science Fiction” had a nice, dark essence to it, but the Ushers needed to be seen a little more. We decided to bring the footlights up for the number to heighten the ethereal feel. I discussed with the lighting designer the possibility of bring the lights down a little once Brad and Janet enter the castle. It was a little bright and seemed to stand out from the rest of the show. I was able to give the lighting designer a clearer vision of the lighting I would like for the three couples during “Toucha Touch Me.” Other lighting acknowledgments were simply to bring focus to specific action on the stage.

The cast was really taking hold of their characters and discovering new things about the storyline. This brought a new energy to some of the performances. It was great to watch them take new chances. Sometimes additions were left in the performances and sometimes we needed to rein in some things that didn’t quite fit.

After this run through, Kip and I discussed with Martin (sound designer) which of the Ushers we could give a body microphone to. More microphones were being borrowed and we wanted to fill the sound out more as the Ushers were currently being covered by the loudness of the band.

Thursday, March 22, 2007

This night was a run through for the crew to view (stage crew and costume crew). We would also have a few more of the Ushers on microphones. Notes taken for the run-through were a combination of thanks for fixing previous spots and reminders of things that were being forgotten. The praise for good work was now overtaking the attention to choreographic or staging notes. Again, as the performances grew, new bits were finding their way into the show. Some were kept. Some were cut. I was able to really pay attention to detail during this run.

Friday, March 23, 2007

Tonight's rehearsal is a dry tech for the running crew. Originally, we had also scheduled a quick change rehearsal for those actors who needed to work out their quick changes. As we were adding rehearsal to Saturday, we moved the quick change rehearsals to the morning of Saturday. I attended the dry tech to have a look at scene changes and attend to any lighting issues that may still remain.

From this rehearsal, I wrote down some notes to give some of the actors the following day, in regard to sound cues and prop usage. These notes would help the actors become comfortable with these cues and new props.

Saturday, March 24, 2007

This was a scheduled “10 out of 12” rehearsal. Not all of the cast members were called for the beginning of the rehearsal. We started with the actors who needed to figure out their quick changes. Everyone was eventually called to discuss their makeup. As a result of the attention to costume and makeup, rehearsals started a little late. We had hoped to get through all of the show and not have to call the cast in for a rehearsal on Sunday but as time moved on we realized that some rehearsal on Sunday would be advantageous for all involved. This was a long and tough day for the actors, but they stayed pretty focused. As with all performers, the later it got the tougher it was to remain focused. The “10 out of 12” days can be very tough, as the focus it placed on the technical aspects of the show.

This focus on the technical aspects helped the production team find new ideas for the show that would not alter the performances already being given. For the pre-show speech, we decided to cover the stained glass doors with muslin and project the lips motif onto the muslin. At the end of the speech, the Slave Boys would rip the muslin away and take us into “Science Fiction.” The scene change into Brad and Janet’s car scene had been taking too much time and we wondered if the car seat could, perhaps, live onstage until that moment. The car seat was covered with muslin as well and placed upstage left, out of the way of any blocking. Again, I saw moments when a focus of light or a spotlight could enhance the action of the play. These moments were easily taken care of. Performance-wise, there were only a few notes

given to the actors concerning diction, new bits and playing more to the audience.

Sunday, March 25, 2007

It was our hope to get through a fluid, solid run through of the show. We didn't make it through the whole show during the "10 out of 12" so we continued where we left off. I continued recognizing important technical moments and discussed these with the lighting designer, sound designer and costume designer. Because we needed some of the stage crew to page the curtain for the "Floor Show," I asked if we could get a lace glove for each of them. I didn't mind seeing their hands, but wanted that moment to stay in the world of Frank 'n Furter. In my blocking of "Science Fiction Reprise," Brad and Janet were leaning on a different Usher center stage, and I had them reach out to each other with one hand and clasp hands at the last musical beat. I asked if this clasp could be highlighted with a spot or light focus. The outcome was very nice.

The cast was given about 20 minutes to ready themselves for a run through of the show.

Some faculty members were present to view the run through and gave me some very helpful notations on their view of the show – more eyes are always a better thing to have. Some ideas given were: Eddie's gut bag should be bigger; Narrator should crack whip after words in pre-show rather than during words; Narrator is sort of glossing over the mention of Dr. Scott in the pre-show speech.

We also needed to find people to strike Frank's chaise and the two planters that were used for Frank's part of the *Floor Show*. Javier was assigned the stage right planter, Andrew the stage left planter, and Matt and Taylor were available to strike the chaise.

Monday, March 26, 2007

This is the first run through with most of the costumes. The cast was called in with plenty of time to get dressed and in makeup – or so we thought. The run through started a little later than we expected. My first note for the cast that night was that we needed to figure out how much time was needed to get ready for the show.

This night there were a lot of positive notes as the pacing of the show and the characterizations were popping. Much of the notes for the actors were concerning sight lines. The choreography was looking good – glitches here and there – but, altogether, good. For "Touch-A Touch Me," I decided to bring the Tranny Trio to the stage level for their first entrance. Having them up on the center platform was awkward and made their next transition awkward. Other technical questions I had were already being addressed by the proper person. It's good to have a team on the same wavelength.

The show is really starting to click and the cast is getting more and more comfortable. The show just needs another bump of energy and I think an audience will help make that happen.

Tuesday, March 27

Tonight was a full dress-run. I can feel the cast and the production team getting more and more excited as we get closer to opening night. The cast has been wanting to get in front of an audience for a while. I know I'm happy with the direction the show is taking. We're still having sound issues and haven't stabilized exactly how many microphones are available.

This evening we had a number of faculty members on-hand to offer words of encouragement. They gave us very helpful reactions to the show and minor suggestions here and there. As I've said before, it's very nice to have other eyes and ears around. Some of the notes were notes I had previously given, but some were new and I offered all of them to the *Rocky Horror* cast:

- The curtain speech needs to move more quickly.
- Narrator can relax a bit. It's a little pushed now and then.
- General note to all: Don't assume everyone knows the story. Don't gloss over anything.
- (We tried the Narrator on a handheld microphone, to have a backup body mic) No one liked the look of the handheld, so we will put the Narrator back on a body microphone.
- There was a suggestion that the Ushers could be even more chees-y during "Damnit Janet" to counteract their normal attitude. I agreed and gave the cast some moments where they could drop out of their 'attitude.'

- General note – the audience was sometimes being left out. The cast can play more toward the audience. I replied that I'd been trying to address this issue and that the cast was getting better and better.

Wednesday, March 28, 2007

Before the show, I discussed his entrance and exit from “Sweet Transvestite” with Frank. The permanent entrance would be from upstage right. As he took a similar pattern in that direction on his exit, the exit was changed to upstage left. I also met with the Narrator and the Slave Boys to clarify some of their moments in the show. The three of them were very receptive and we all collaborated on the boundaries and essence of their characters.

As I like to do, I gave the cast a little pep talk before the run through. I knew they were excited about this final run, but they were also very tired from the number of rehearsals we'd had in the past couple of weeks. They were hungry for an audience. I thanked them all for their hard work. It's a really talented cast and I cannot wait to have an audience.

The show is looking really good. Most of my notes are truly picky things. I simply reminded the cast of diction, playing to the audience and maintaining their energy. I know the audience will fall in love with this cast. Kip and I are still not happy with sound. Cues are being missed and the balance is not always 'balanced.' We did finally find a good distribution of the body microphones within the ensemble.

Thursday, March 29, 2007

Opening Night! Kip and I went backstage before the show to give the cast a final pep talk and to thank them for all of their hard work. We knew they were all tired from all the work done in the past couple of weeks. But we knew they would be energized for this opening performance. The younger cast members were especially eager to start the run of the show.

I stood in the back of the house for all of the performance, because I was excited as well and knew I would be too antsy to sit in the house. There weren't many empty seats anyway. The audience was full of people who excitedly anticipated the performance. From the moment Taylor came onto the stage for his pre-show piano moments, the audience had smiles.

I didn't have any paper with me to take notes, because I wanted to give the show my full attention. I did end up grabbing a small piece of paper to take a few picky notes, but most of them were of a technical nature. The cast had an excellent opening night and an eager audience gave them a well-deserved standing ovation.

Sunday, April 1, 2007

I returned to campus to watch the Sunday matinee. Including tech week, this would be the tenth performance in a row for the cast. These performances included two shows on Friday and Saturday (8:00 and 10:30). I heard from some of the cast members that the audiences for the 10:30 performances were amazing. The 10:30

shows brought in an audience that was even more eager to see the show. The cast felt like “rock stars” at these performances.

I was excited to hear the cast response to this kind of audience reaction. Though, I was concerned because I was told that a few cast members were adding or altering things to play with the audience – not particularly in line with the show or its direction. The performance I saw was very good, but there were some new bits that were added which were not in accordance with direction from me or Earl Weaver. I sent my notes from the performance to the stage manager.

Thursday, April 12, 2007

As I have worked with a lot of young performers, I know they tend to get a little more playful when they don't think there's a person-in-charge around (i.e. faculty member or director). Kip and I could not attend a lot of the performances as we were doing our own cabaret performances in Daytona. Earl was still out of commission from his back surgery. Hannah, our stage manager, did an outstanding job, but I know she didn't feel she was afforded proper respect from some of the cast.

Kip and I returned to Orlando tonight to videotape the performance. There were some issues with video recorders, so we weren't able to complete that task. Also, there were still sound issues and Dr. Scott had to perform “Eddie's Teddy” with no amplification. I was also disturbed by the continued adding of bits to the show – bits that only detracted from the story. The show was still good and had a lot of energy. I

was simply put off by some cast members simply playing for laughs. I got home and decided to send notes to the cast. I didn't attack them with a lot of bad notes. I also sent a number of good reactions from my seeing the show.

The notes were printed out and posted on the callboard and the stage manager attached a sheet for each cast member to initial – acknowledging that they read the notes. The notes were taken very professionally and the cast made the slight adjustments to the performances they were previously given. There hadn't been a great shift in the show – only those closely connected would recognize changes. But the changes were enough to add too much time to the show.

For me, this has been an amazing experience. I loved the process of creating staging and choreography. It was a learning experience in that this was the largest cast I'd worked with as a member of the production staff. Everyone on the production staff talked constantly about how blessed we were to have the cast we got. I was also personally blessed with an amazing set designer, an amazing costume designer and an amazing lighting designer. The "Rocky Horror Show" team at UCF was one of the strongest teams I've ever worked with.

CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSION

“You don’t have to be the greatest singer/actor/dancer just as long as you can do a bit of everything and you are prepared to throw yourself in and make something of a fool of yourself onstage, you can get by” (Michaels, 100). I think that statement might also be applicable to directors and choreographers in certain respects. For me, great theatre exists where the creative team and the actors tackle a show with no reservations and no restrictions.

Our production didn’t set out to reinvent *The Rocky Horror Show*. We simply wanted to infuse a little of our own respective flairs into it. The audience would still have the story they might know and the characters they were familiar with. The songs would be the same. The dialogue would be the same. But the Transylvanians might have a new look and the choreography would have a different life than it had known before.

I think Earl Weaver’s populating Frank ‘n Furter’s castle with a few more Ushers gave a little more credence to Frank’s cult-like figurehead. The youthful take on the costumes, I believe, made the production accessible to a wider audience. And it was my hope that the choreography would delight the audience.

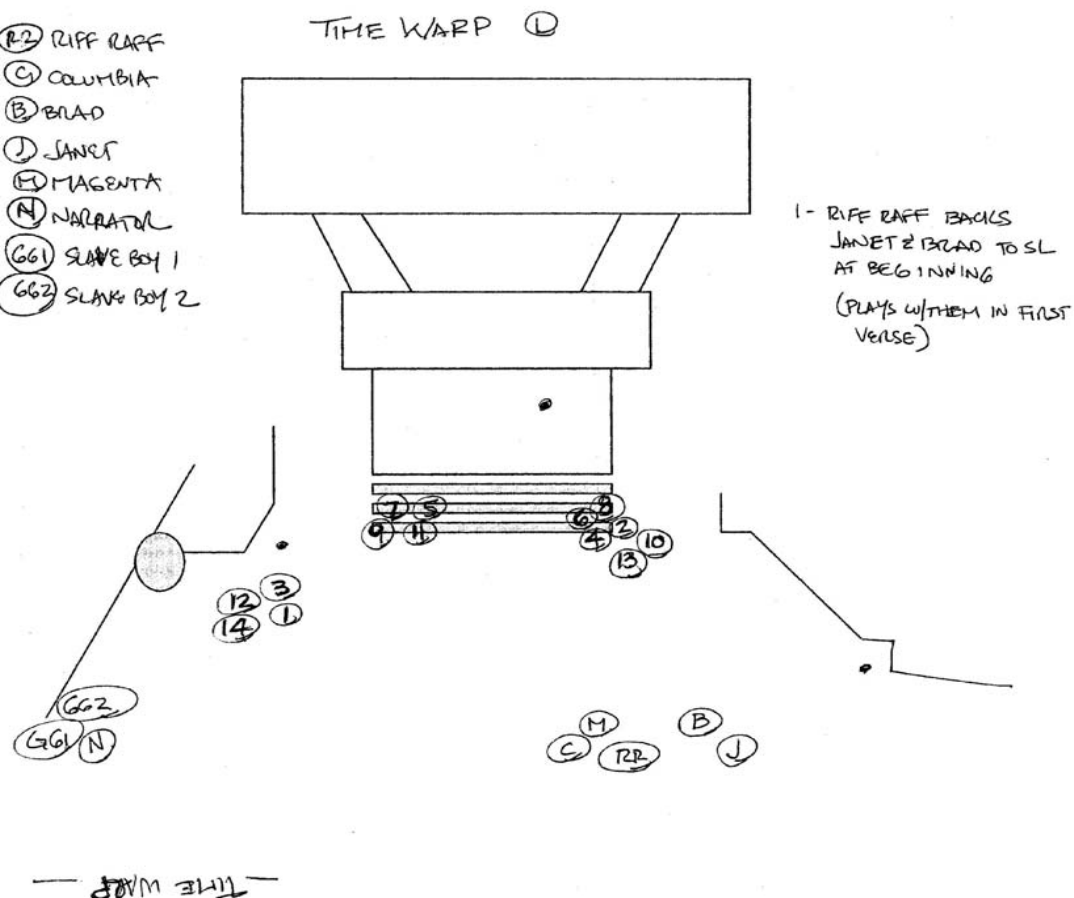
Redefining the choreography of a show cannot hinder its creative aptitude. Choreographers are moved differently by the same music and that allows us all to give our own interpretation. Though my initial thoughts concerning choreography for *Rocky*

Horror were geared toward an updated energy, what transferred to the stage was an amalgamation of styles that were inspired by the music. There were steps inspired by dances seen on MTV and other music cable channels, but there were also steps inspired by the likes of Busby Berkeley and Marcel Marceau.

Through my participation with *The Rocky Horror Show* many things were redefined for me. My future was redefined as I acted as choreographer and ultimately director. My approach to choreographing was redefined as I realized what it took to more thoughtfully schedule dance rehearsals. My life was redefined as I moved into the position of teacher. And my art was redefined as I observed the creation of UCF's *The Rocky Horror Show*.

APPENDIX A
BLOCKING NOTES FOR “TIME WARP”

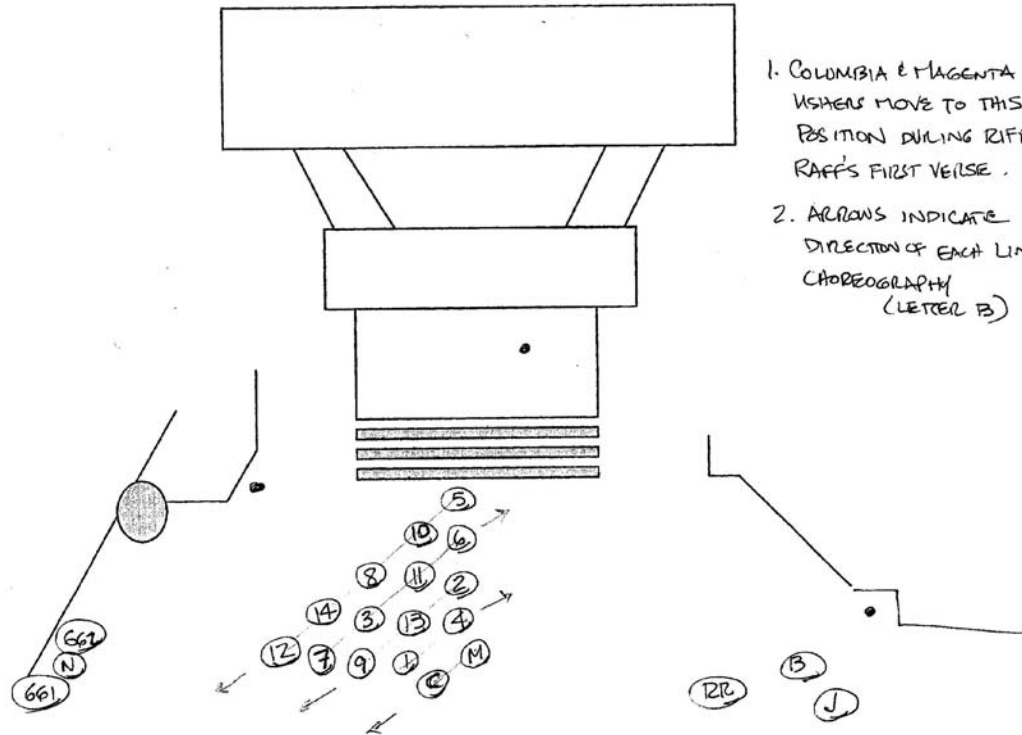
- ① TERRY
 ② LACEY
 ③ DONOVAN
 ④ KHRISTY
 ⑤ BRITTANY
 ⑥ SAMANTHA
 ⑦ MATT
 ⑧ TAYLOR
 ⑨ ERIKA
 ⑩ JAVIER
 ⑪ RACHEL
 ⑫ ANDREW
 ⑬ KELLY
 ⑭ MADISON
 ⑮ CHANTOY
- ⑫ RIFF RAFF
 ⑬ COLUMBIA
 ⑭ BLAD
 ⑮ JANET
 ⑯ MAGENTA
 ⑰ NARRATOR
 ⑱ SLAVE BOY 1
 ⑲ SLAVE BOY 2



Note: Blocking indicates beginning positions for all before "Time Warp" begins.

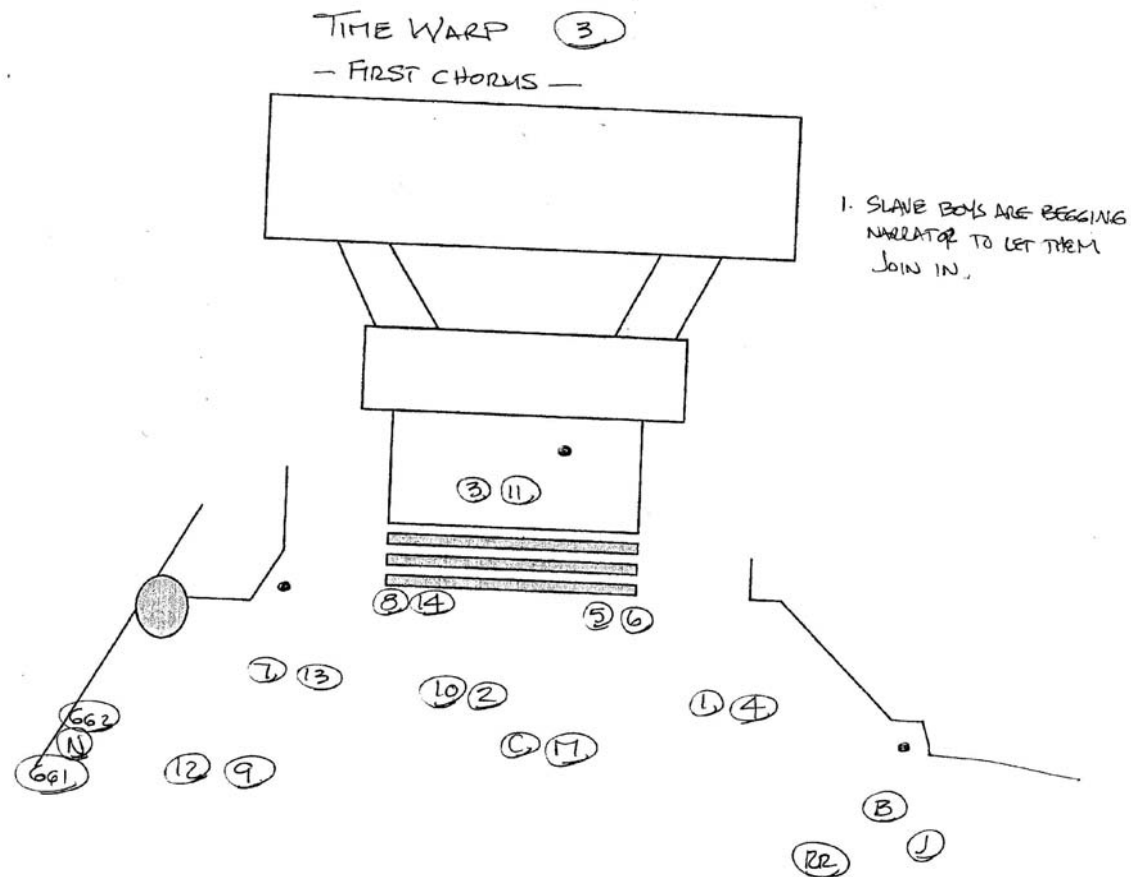
- ① TERRY
- ② LACEY
- ③ DONOVAN
- ④ KRISTY
- ⑤ BRITTANY
- ⑥ SAMANTHA
- ⑦ MATT
- ⑧ TAYLOR
- ⑨ ERIKA
- ⑩ JAVIER
- ⑪ RACHEL
- ⑫ ANDREW
- ⑬ KELLY
- ⑭ MADISON
- ⑮ CHANTY

TIME WARP ②



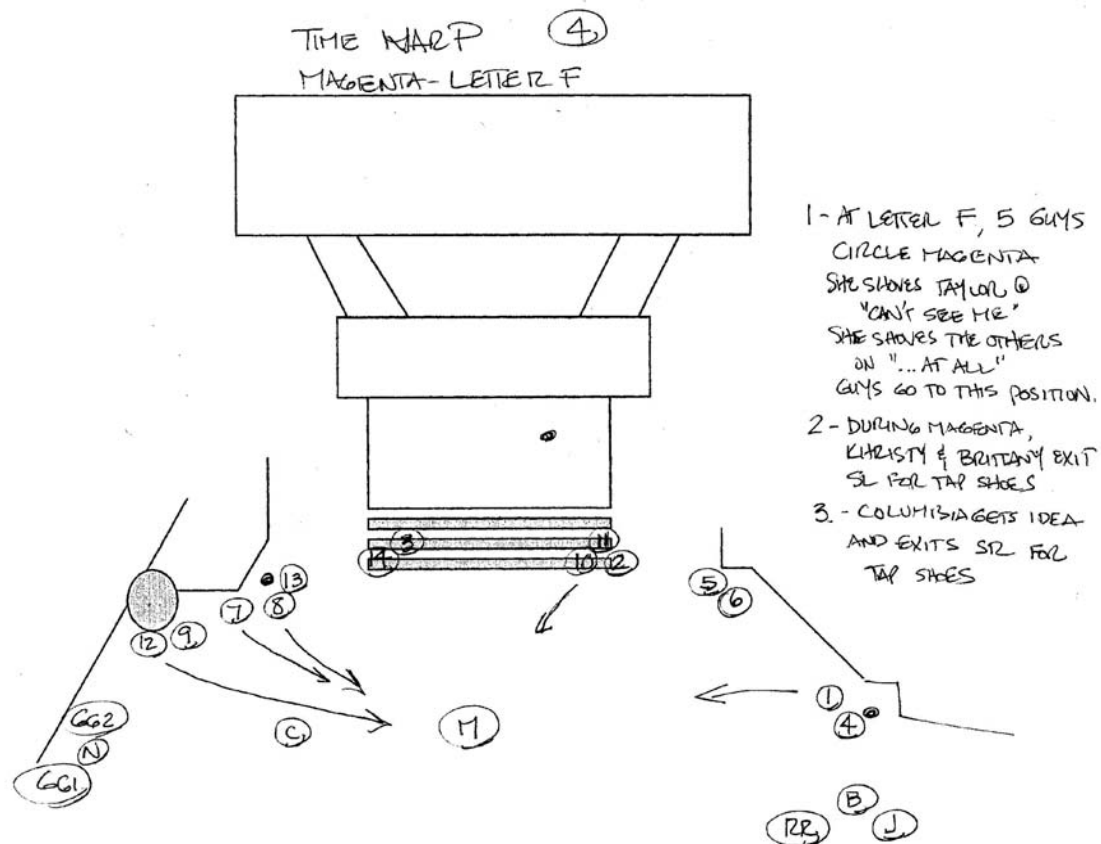
Note: Blocking indicates the movement of Ushers, etc. into stage right clump.

- ① TERIZY
- ② LACEY
- ③ DONOVAN
- ④ KRISTY
- ⑤ BRITTANY
- ⑥ SAMANTHA
- ⑦ MATT
- ⑧ TAYLOR
- ⑨ ERIKA
- ⑩ JAVIER
- ⑪ RACHEL
- ⑫ ANDREW
- ⑬ KELLY
- ⑭ MADISON
- ⑮ CHANTOY



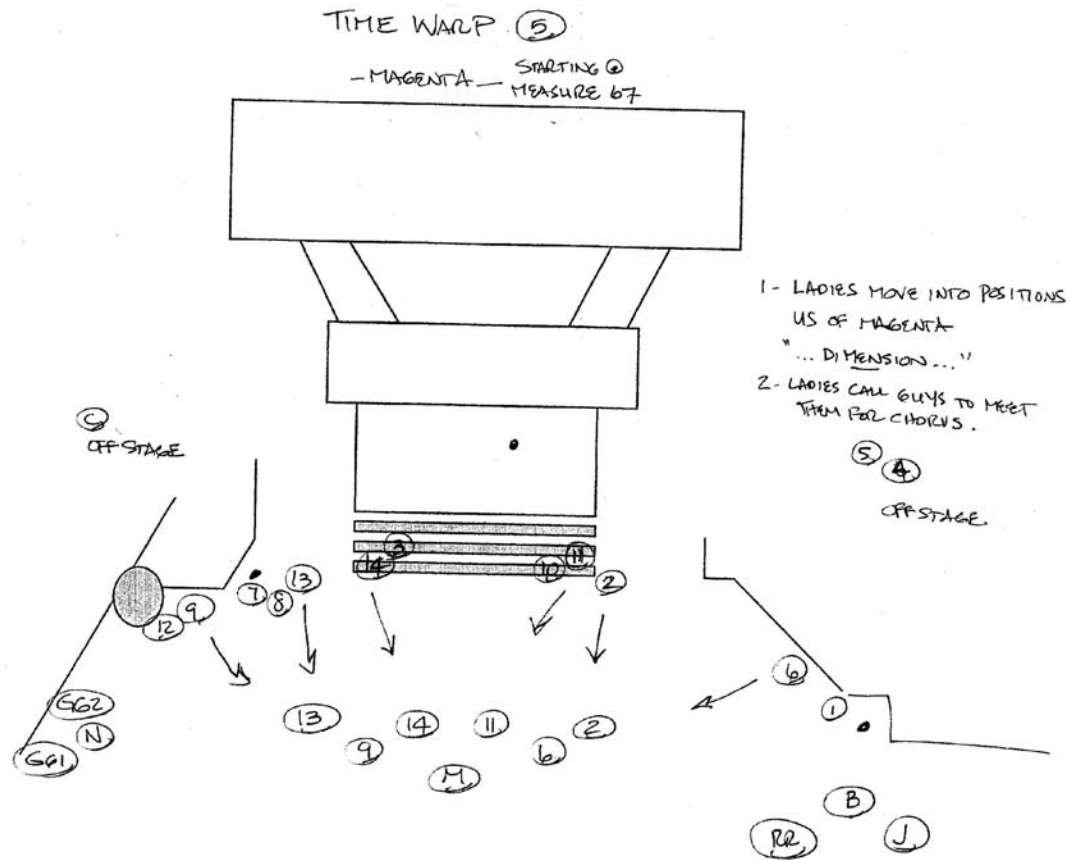
Note: Blocking indicates coupling of Ushers, etc. for first "Time Warp" theme section.

- ① TERRY
- ② LACEY
- ③ DONOVAN
- ④ KRISTY
- ⑤ BRITTANY
- ⑥ SAMANTHA
- ⑦ MATT
- ⑧ TAYLOR
- ⑨ ERIKA
- ⑩ JAVIER
- ⑪ RACHEL
- ⑫ ANDREW
- ⑬ KELLY
- ⑭ MADISON
- ⑮ CHANTY



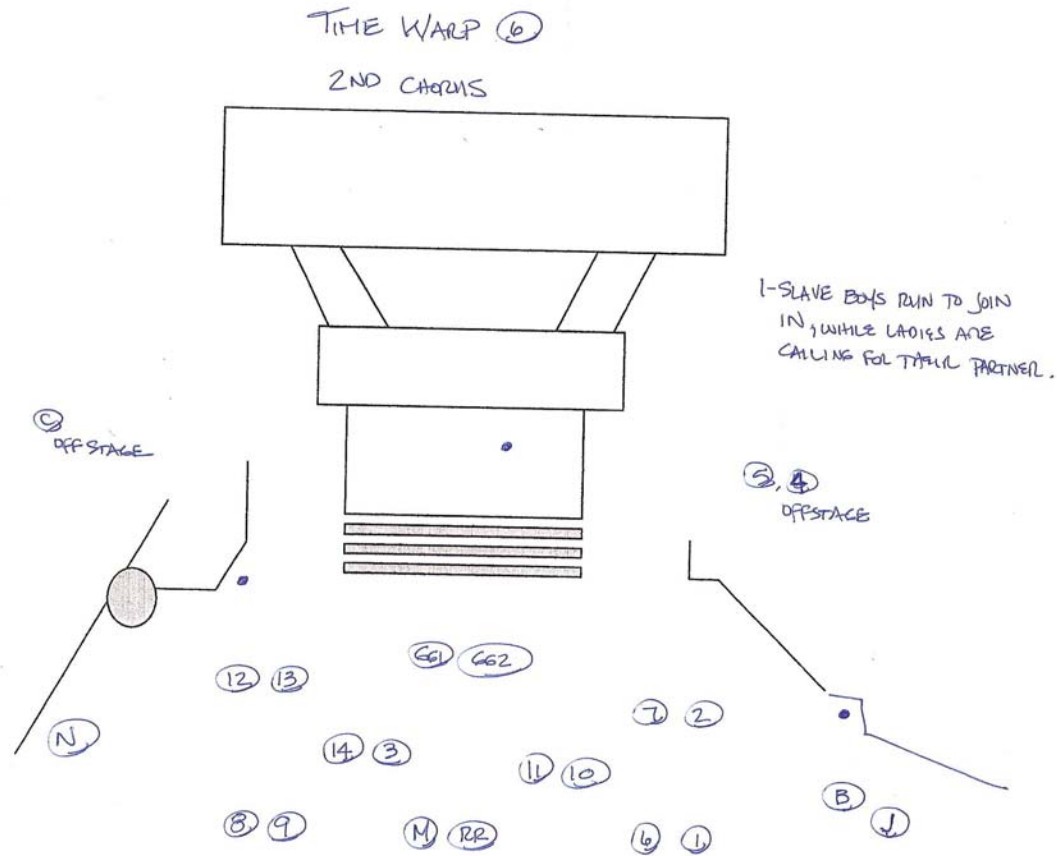
Note: Blocking indicates spreading out for Magenta solo and men coming in to dance with her.

- ① TERIZY
- ② LACEY
- ③ DONOVAN
- ④ KHRISTY
- ⑤ BRITTANY
- ⑥ SAMANTHA
- ⑦ MATT
- ⑧ TAYLOR
- ⑨ ERIKA
- ⑩ JAVIER
- ⑪ RACHEL
- ⑫ ANDREW
- ⑬ KELLY
- ⑭ MADISON
- ⑮ CHANTY



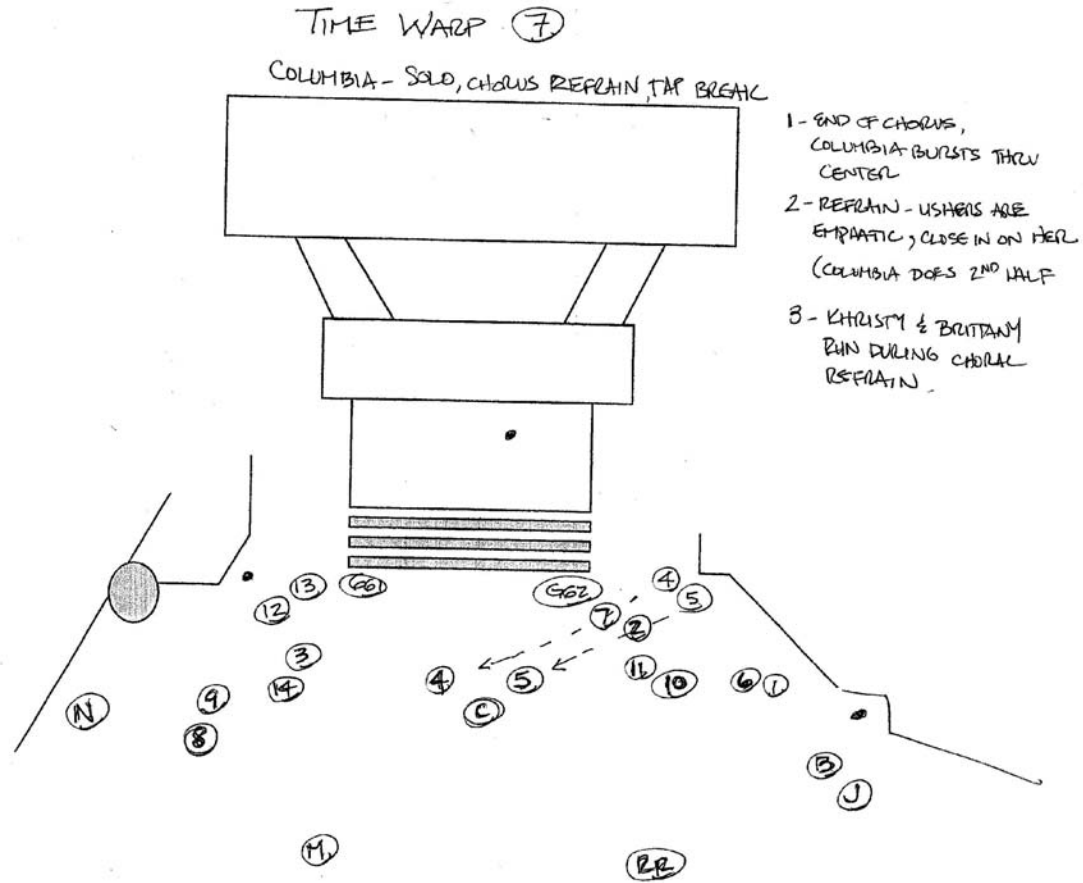
Note: Blocking indicates movement of female Ushers joining Magenta in her feature.

- ① TERIZY
- ② LACEY
- ③ DONOVAN
- ④ KHRISTY
- ⑤ BRITTANY
- ⑥ SAMANTHA
- ⑦ MATT
- ⑧ TAYLOR
- ⑨ ERIKA
- ⑩ JAVIER
- ⑪ RACHEL
- ⑫ ANDREW
- ⑬ KELLY
- ⑭ MADISON
- ⑮ CHANTREL

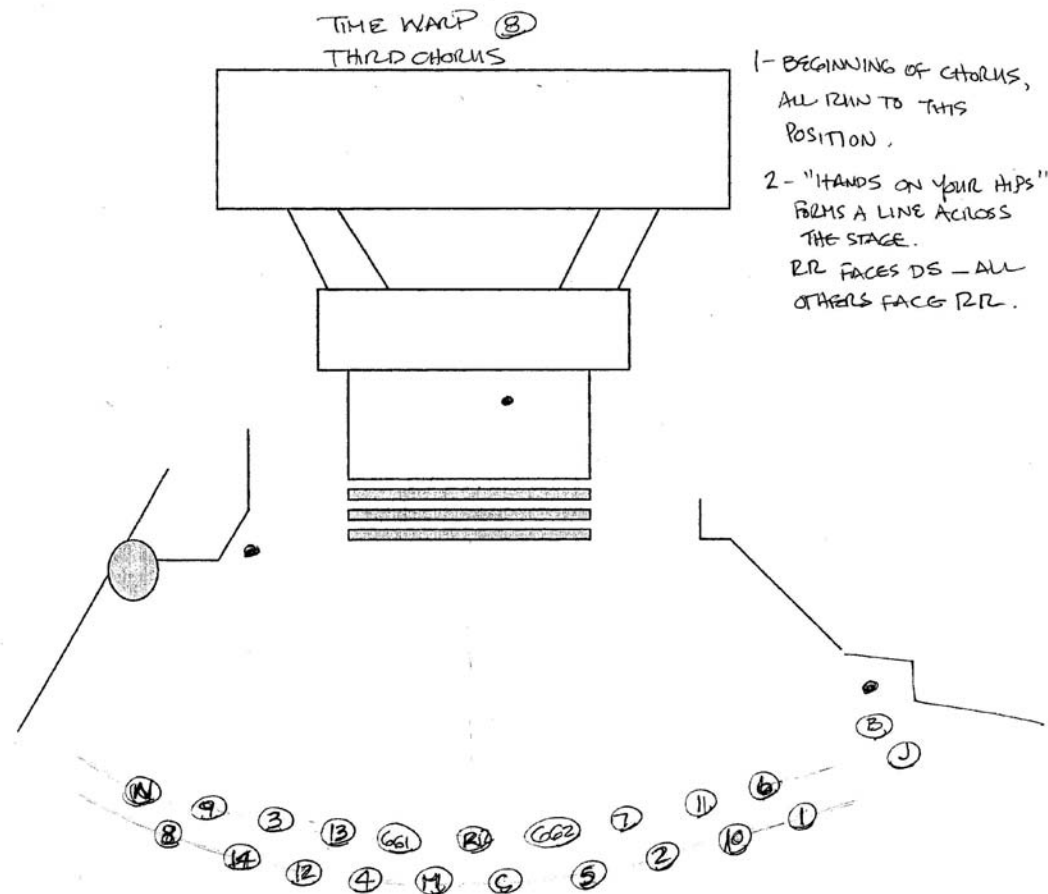


Note: Blocking indicates coupling of dancers for second "Time Warp" theme section.

- ① TERRY
- ② LACEY
- ③ DONOVAN
- ④ KRISTY
- ⑤ BRITTANY
- ⑥ SAMANTHA
- ⑦ MATT
- ⑧ TAYLOR
- ⑨ ERIKA
- ⑩ JAVIER
- ⑪ RACHEL
- ⑫ ANDREW
- ⑬ KELLY
- ⑭ MADISON
- ⑮ CHANTY

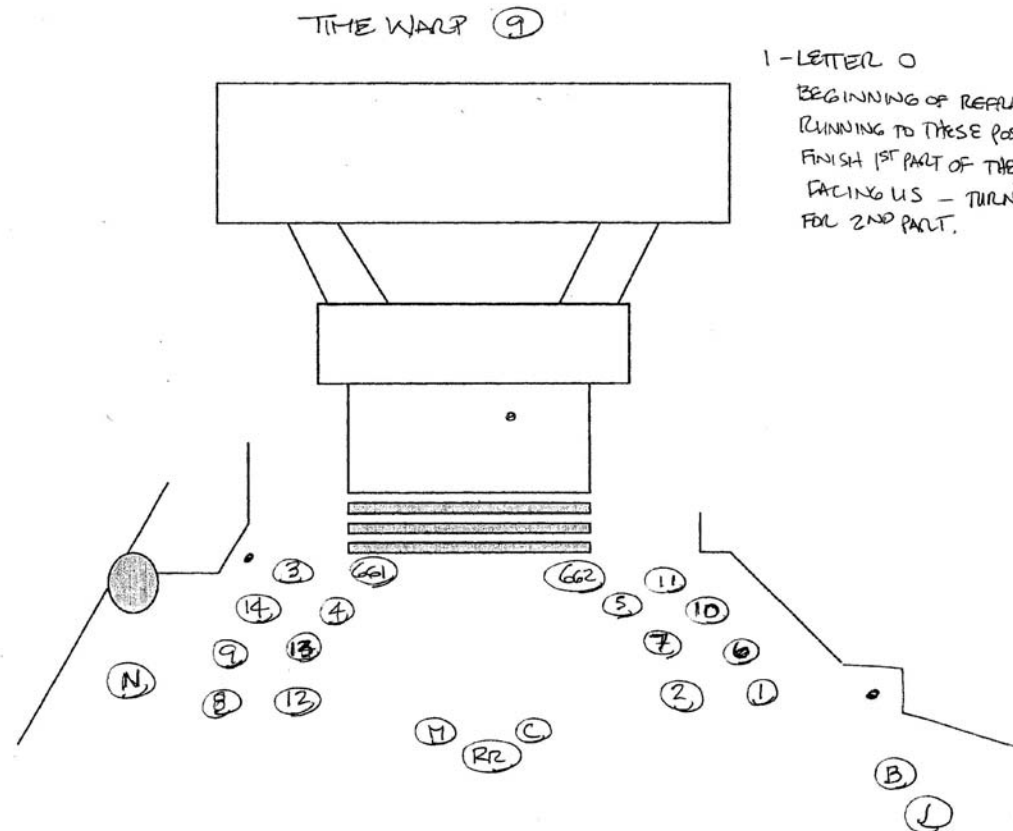


Note: Blocking indicates opening up of stage for Columbia's feature as well as the two ladies who join her.

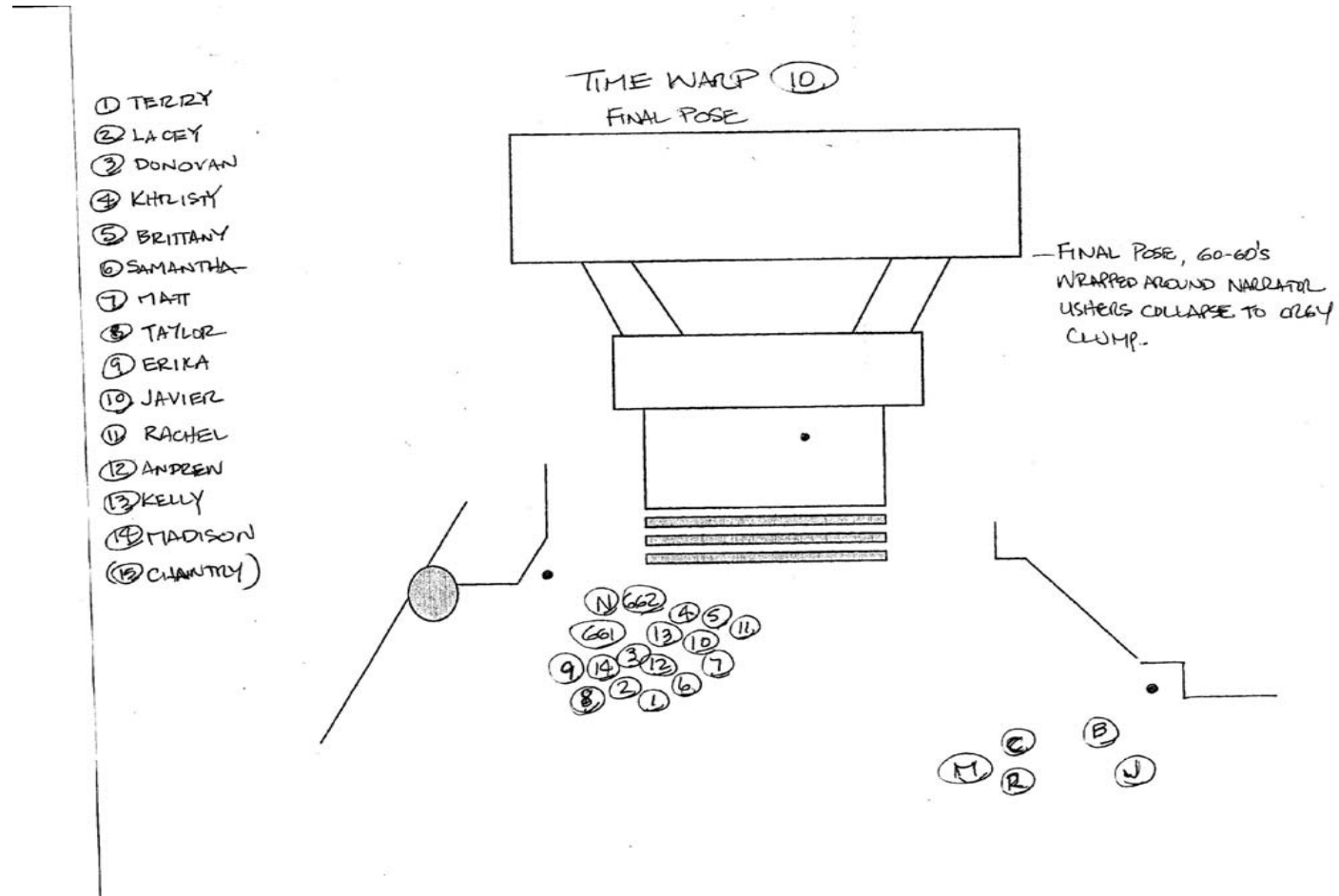


108

- ① TERRY
- ② LACEY
- ③ DONOVAN
- ④ KRISTY
- ⑤ BRITTANY
- ⑥ SAMANTHA
- ⑦ MATT
- ⑧ TAYLOR
- ⑨ ERIKA
- ⑩ JAVIER
- ⑪ RACHEL
- ⑫ ANDREW
- ⑬ KELLY
- ⑭ MADISON
- ⑮ CHANTLY

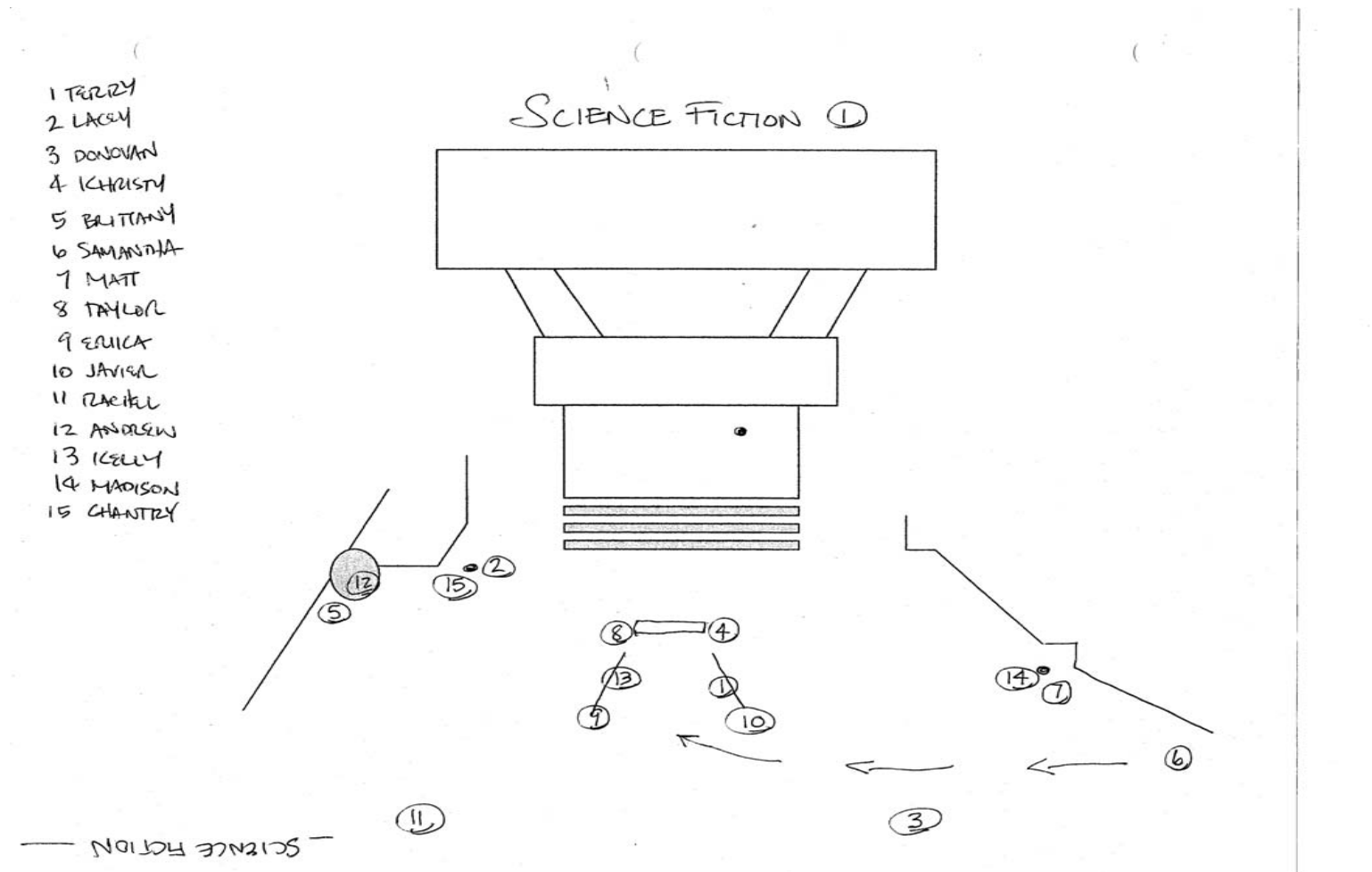


Note: Blocking indicates positions for refrain of music at Letter O in the score.

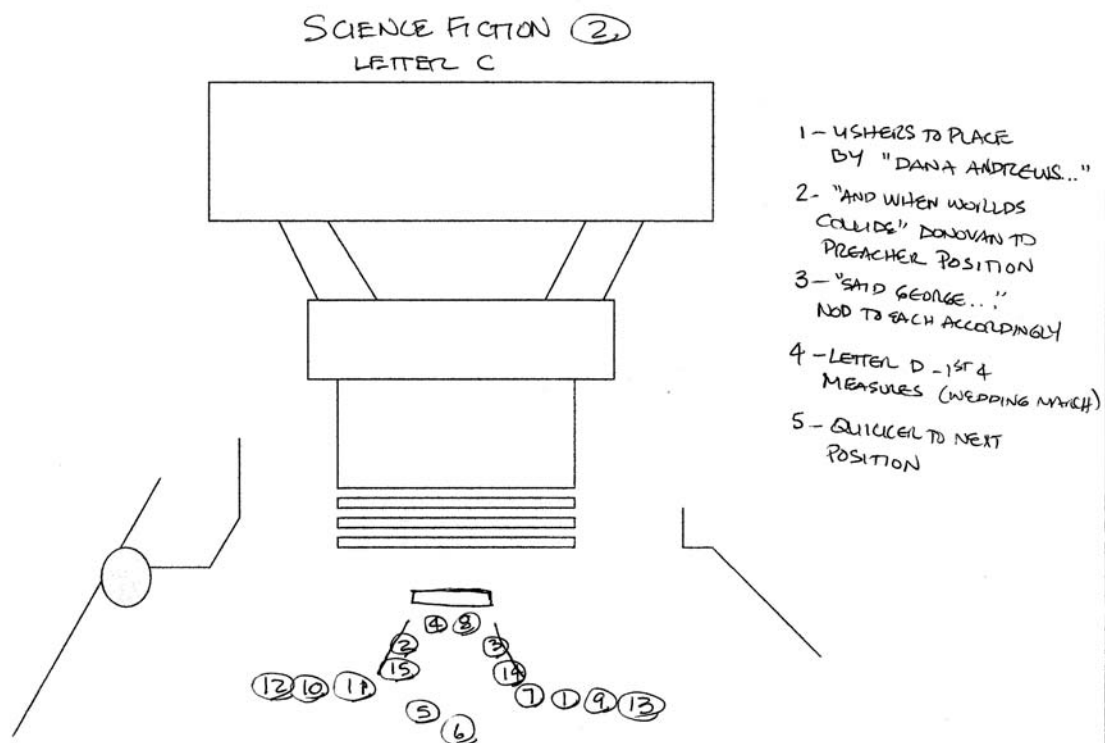


Note: Blocking indicates positions for end of "Time Warp"

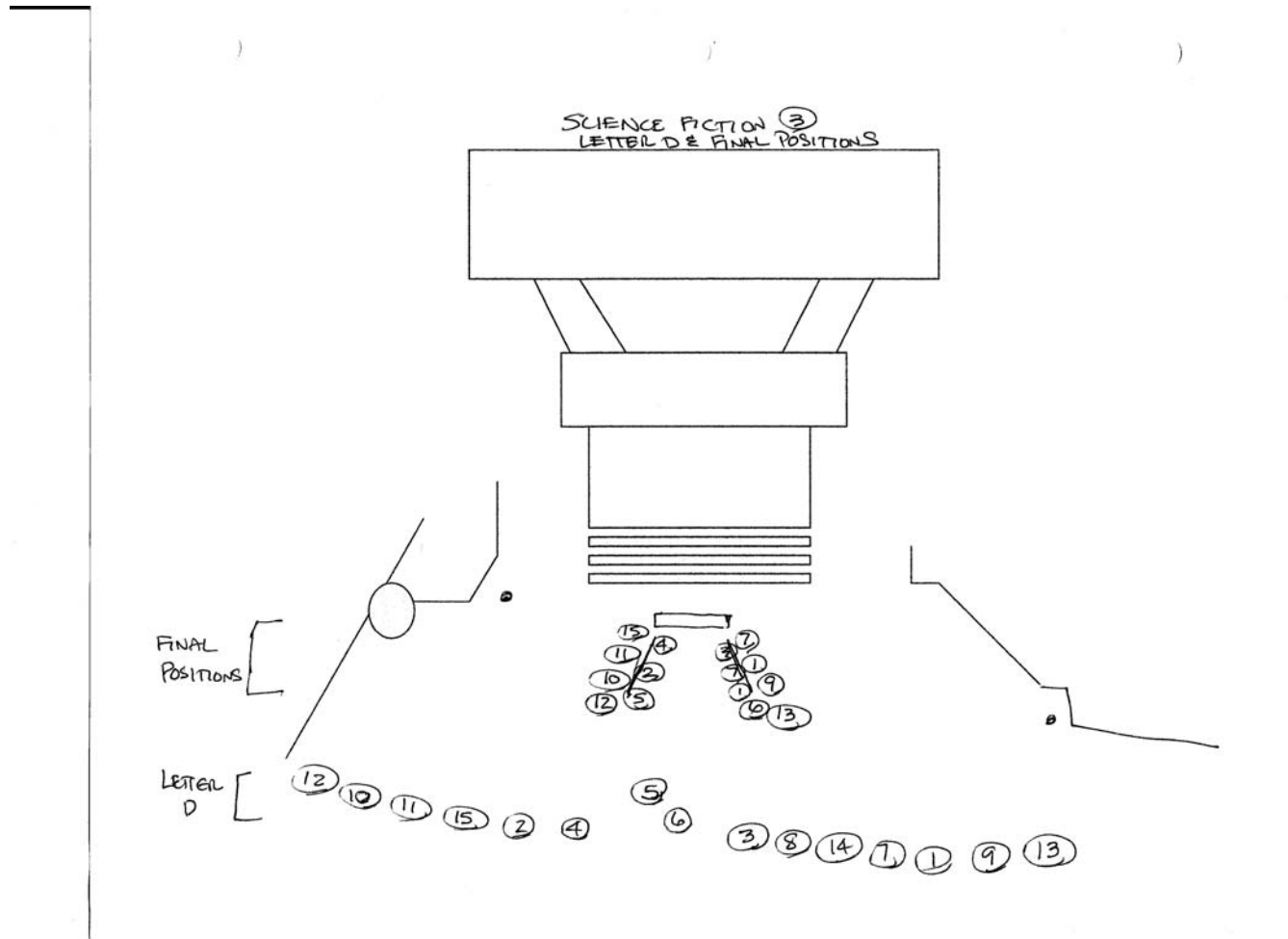
APPENDIX B
BLOCKING NOTES FOR “SCIENCE FICTION”



Note: Blocking indicates starting positions after entrance. Arrows indicate Usherettes cross to center stage.



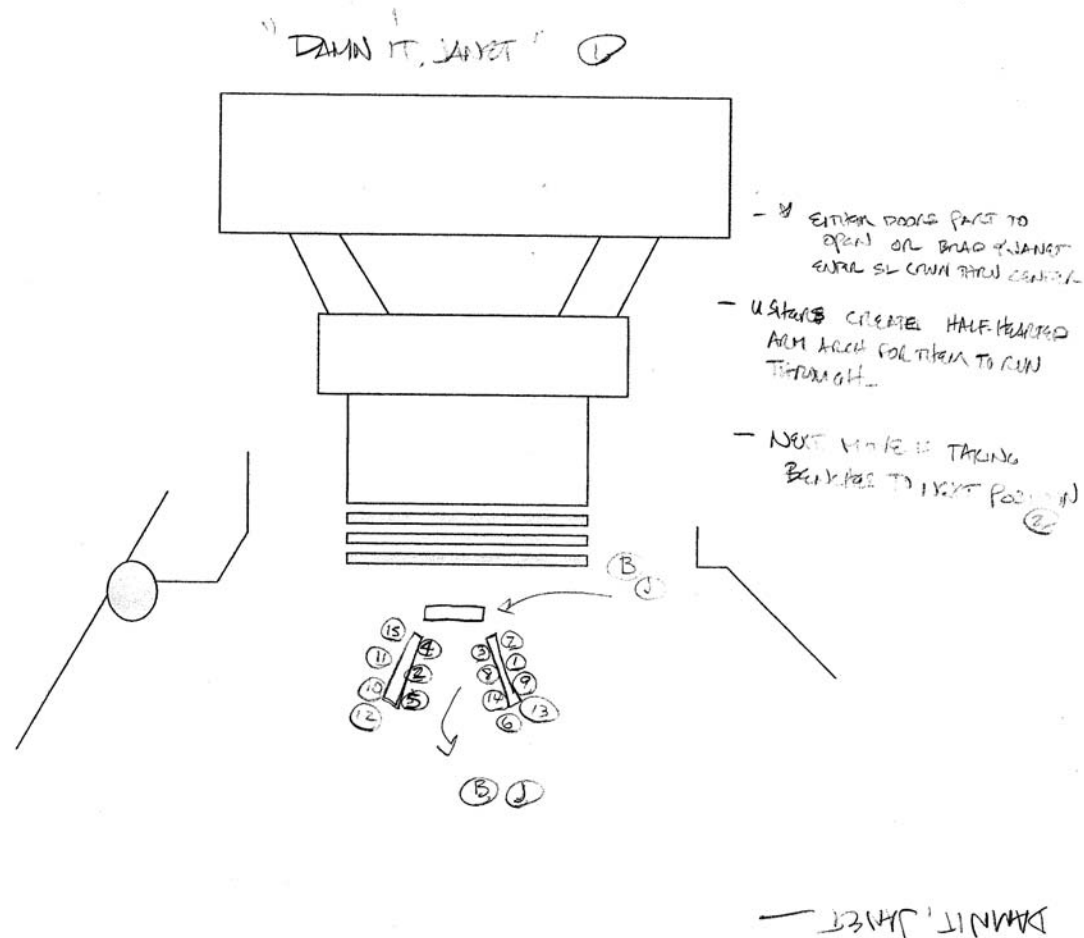
Note: Blocking indicates position for "Dana Andrews..." section of the music.



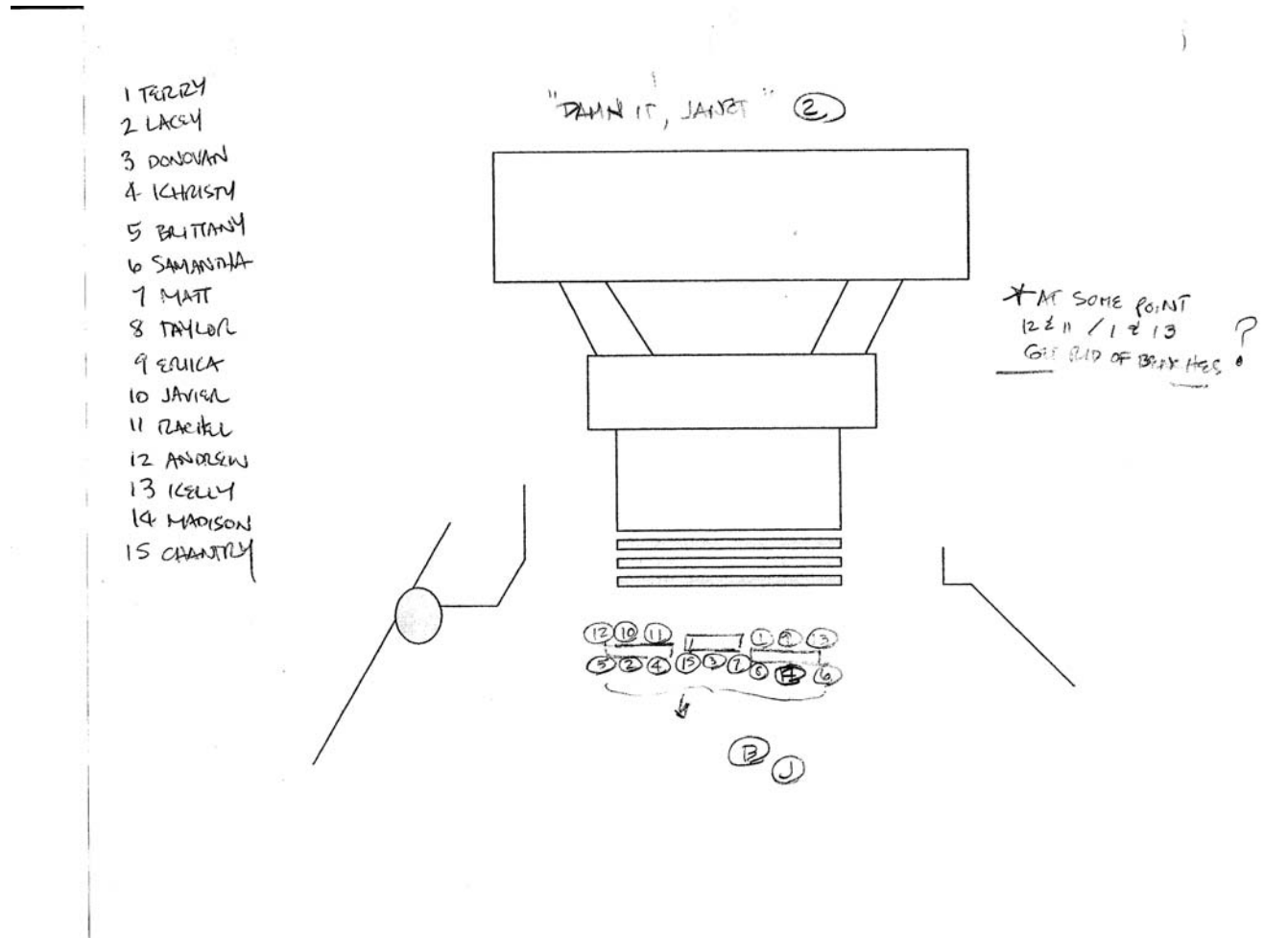
Note: Blocking indicates positions for Letter D of the music, followed by final positions of the song.

APPENDIX C
BLOCKING NOTES FOR “DAMNIT, JANET”

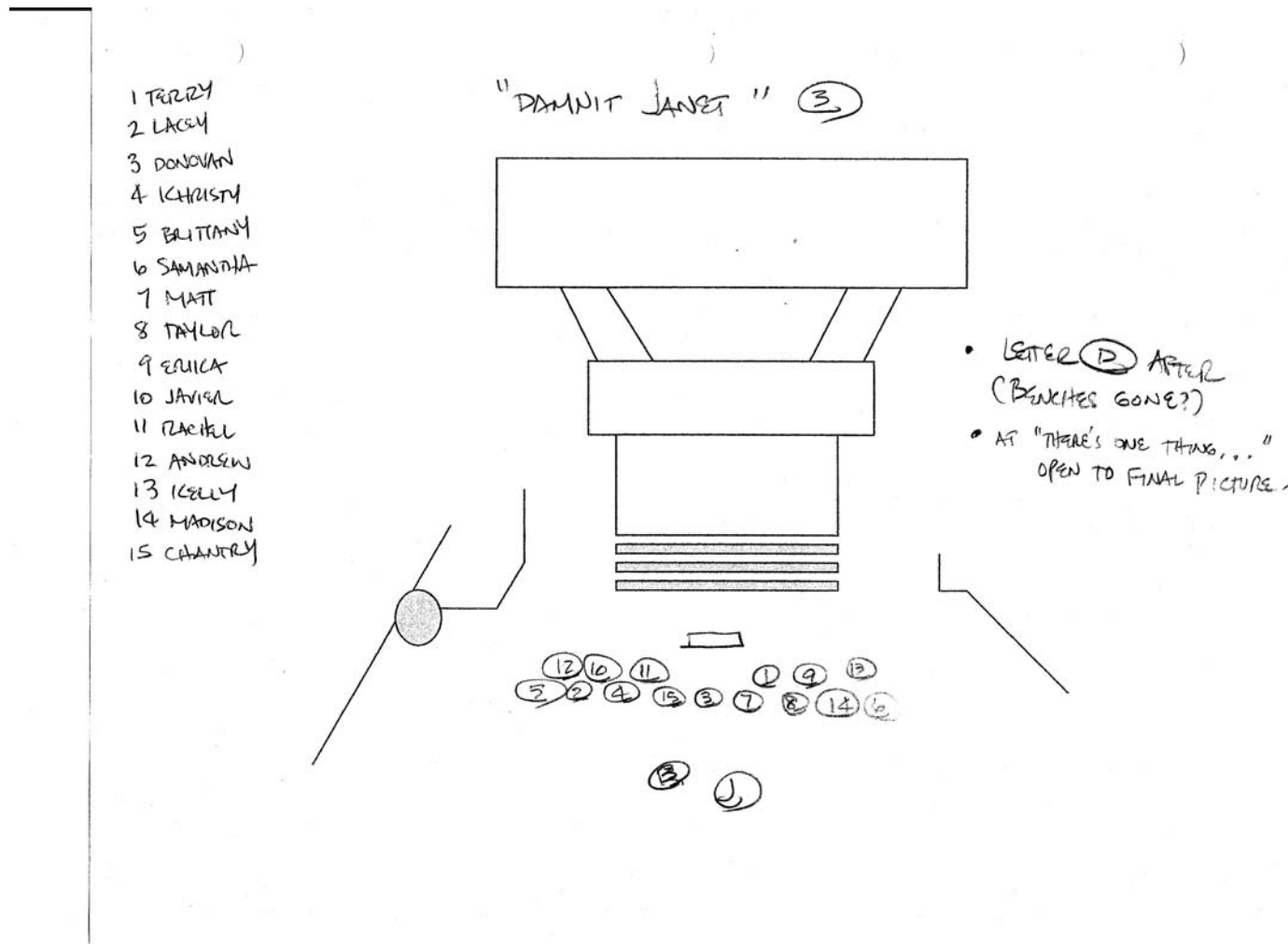
- 1 TERRIZ
- 2 LACEY
- 3 DONOVAN
- 4 CHRISTY
- 5 BRITTANY
- 6 SAMANTHA
- 7 MATT
- 8 TAYLOR
- 9 ERICA
- 10 JAVIER
- 11 RACHEL
- 12 ANDREW
- 13 KELLY
- 14 MADISON
- 15 CHARLEY



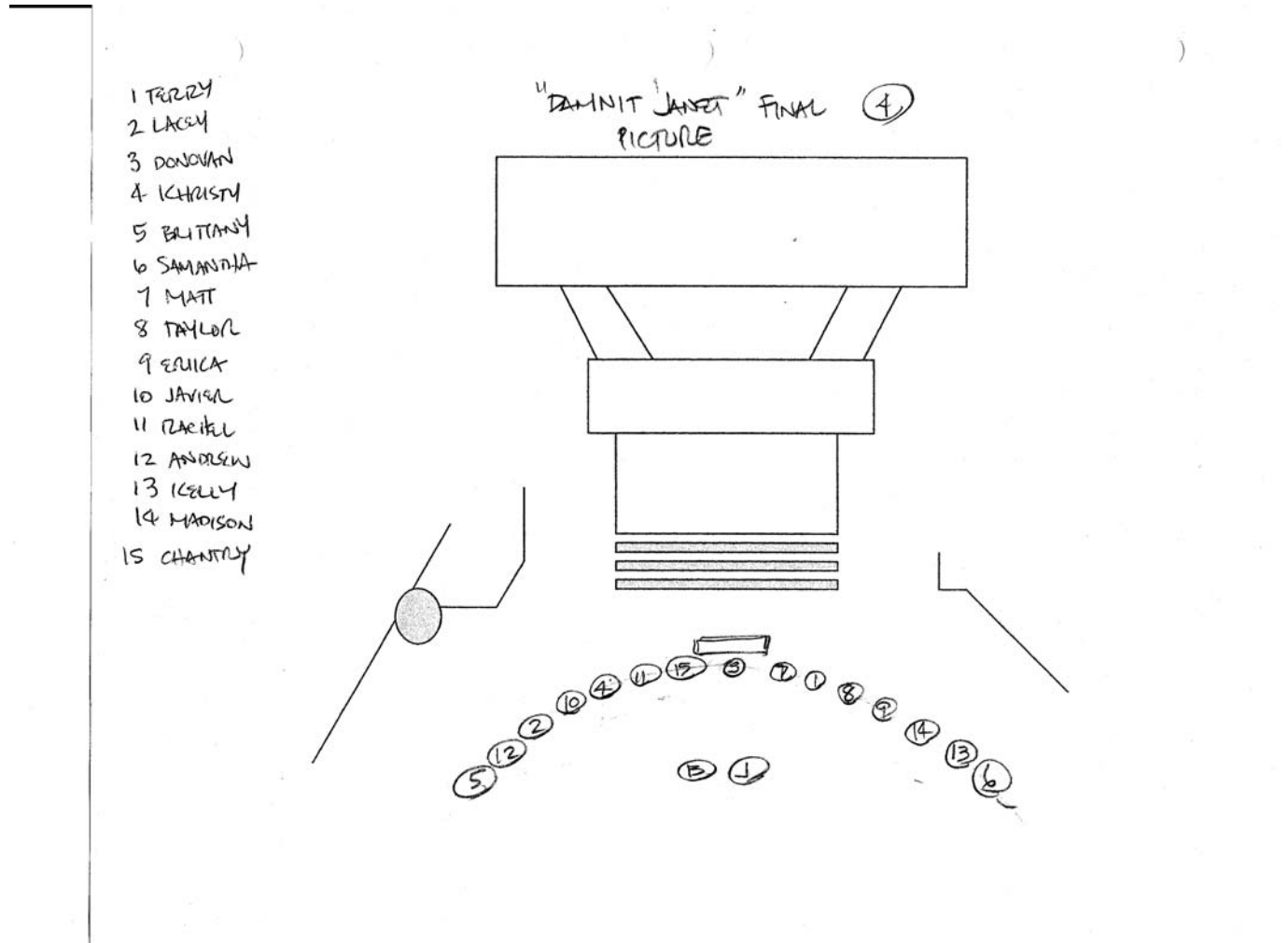
Notes: Blocking indicates first entrance for Brad and Janet and positions for Ushers.



Note: Blocking indicates move for Ushers upstage of Brad and Janet, giving Brad and Janet stage space. There's a question in my notes about moving the benches offstage at this point. It was reserved for the next scene change.

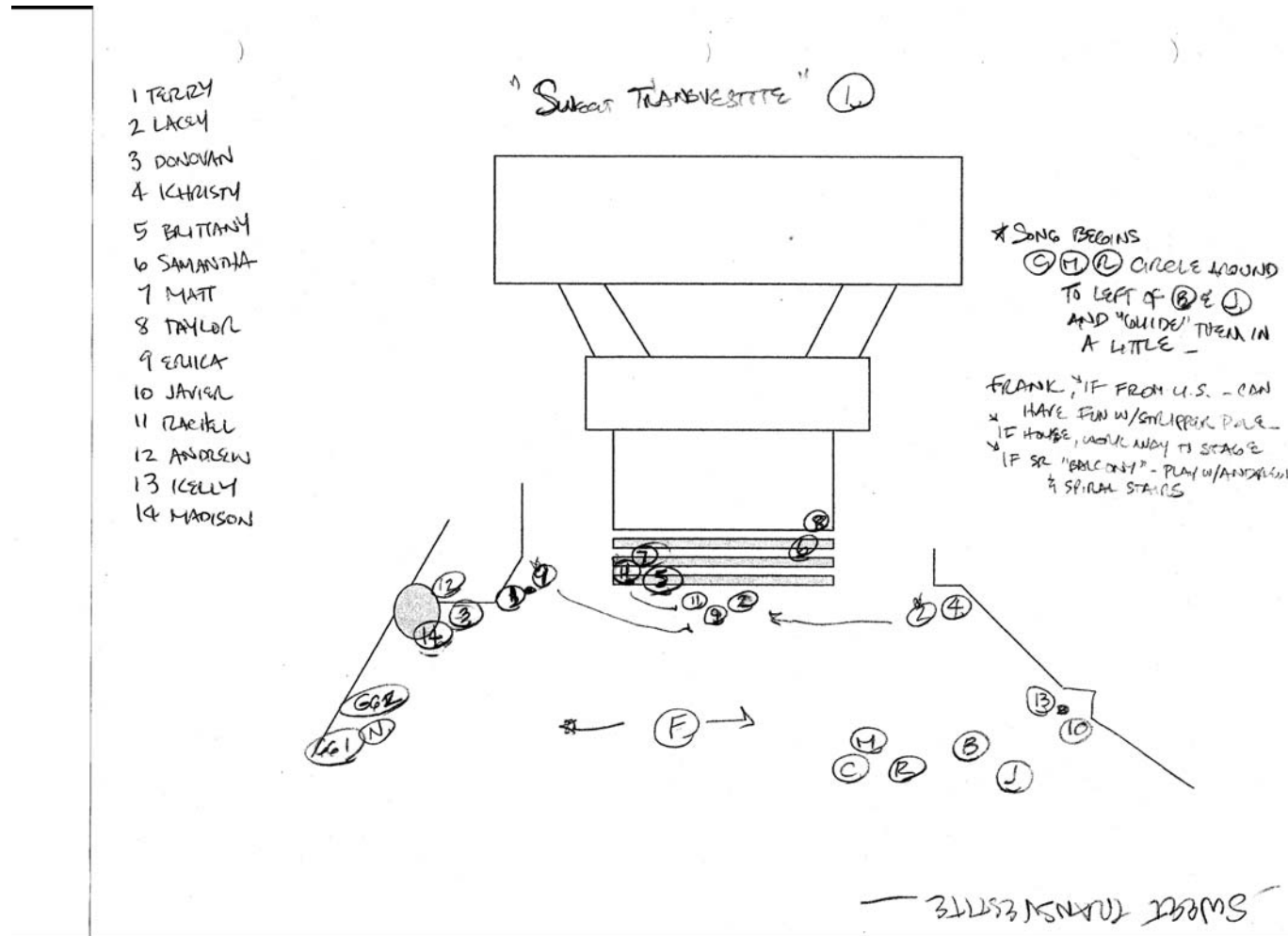


Notes: Blocking indicates spreading out of Ushers upstage of Brad and Janet for 'choir section.'



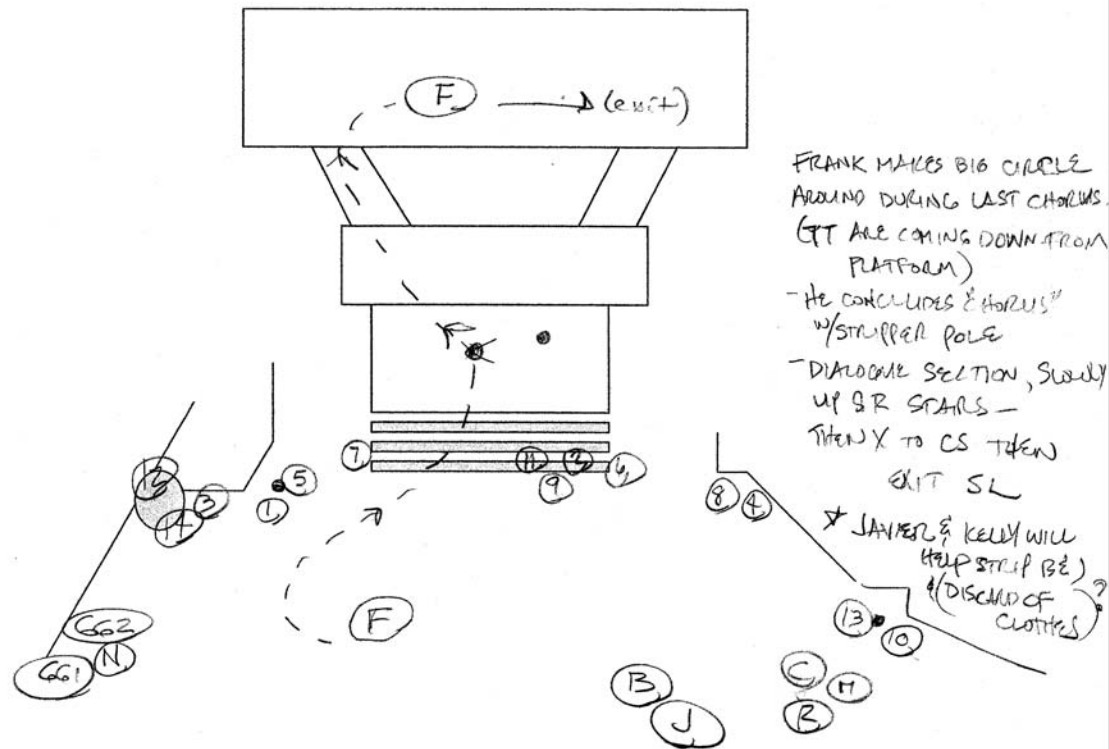
Note: Blocking indicates final positions for Ushers and Brad and Janet.

APPENDIX D
BLOCKING NOTES FOR “SWEET TRANSVESTITE”



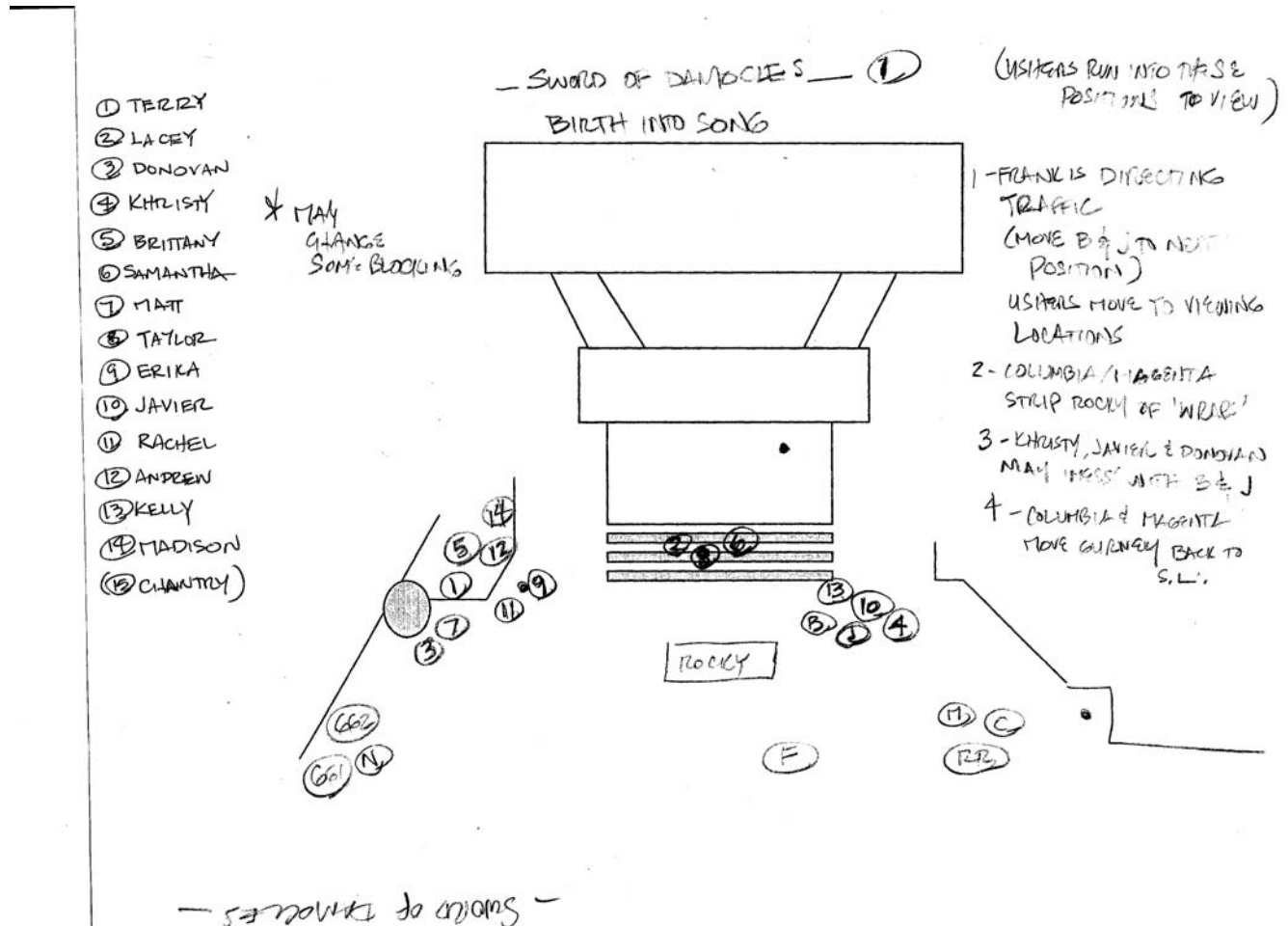
- 1 TERRY
- 2 LACEY
- 3 DONOVAN
- 4 CHRISTY
- 5 BRITANNY
- 6 SAMANTHA
- 7 MATT
- 8 TAYLOR
- 9 ERIKA
- 10 JAVIER
- 11 RACHEL
- 12 ANDREW
- 13 KELLY
- 14 MADISON

SWEET TRANSVESTITE - END (2)



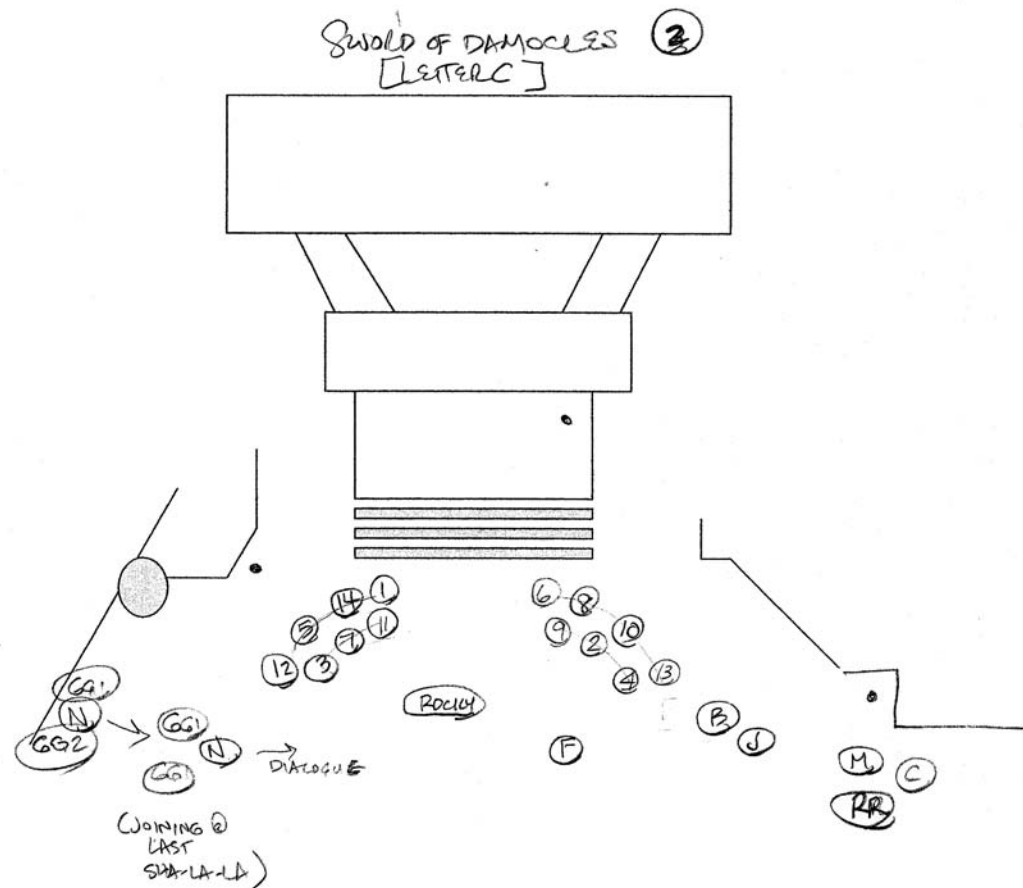
Note: Blocking indicates Frank 'n Furter's exit. It was later changed to an exit up the stage left stair units and exit stage left.

APPENDIX E
BLOCKING NOTES FOR “SWORD OF DAMOCLES”

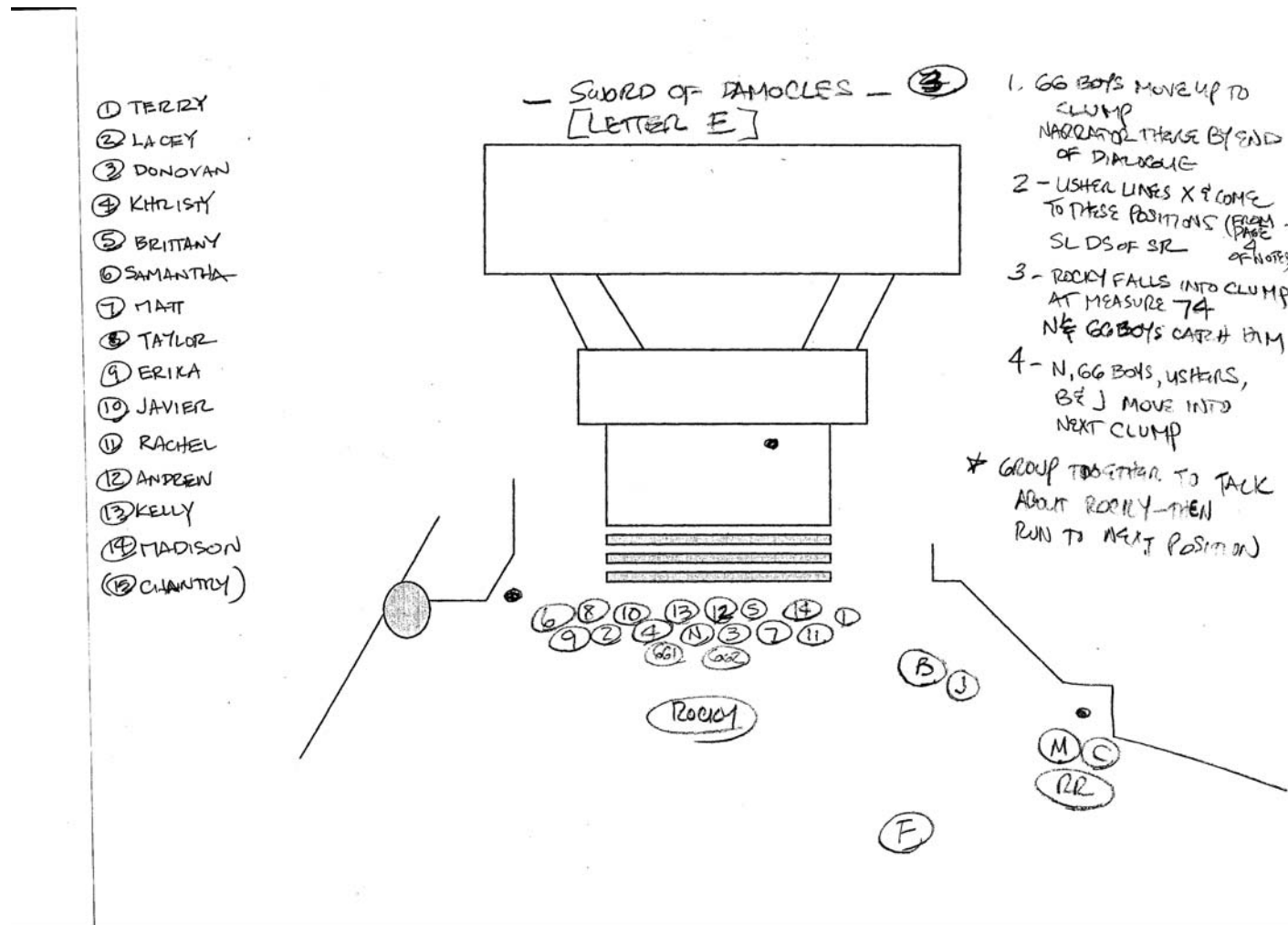


Note: Blocking indicates staging for Rocky's birth. When the show moved onto the stage Frank and the gurney was moved to stage left (where above staging indicates Riff Raff (RR), Magenta (M) and Columbia (C)). Other blocking remained as is.

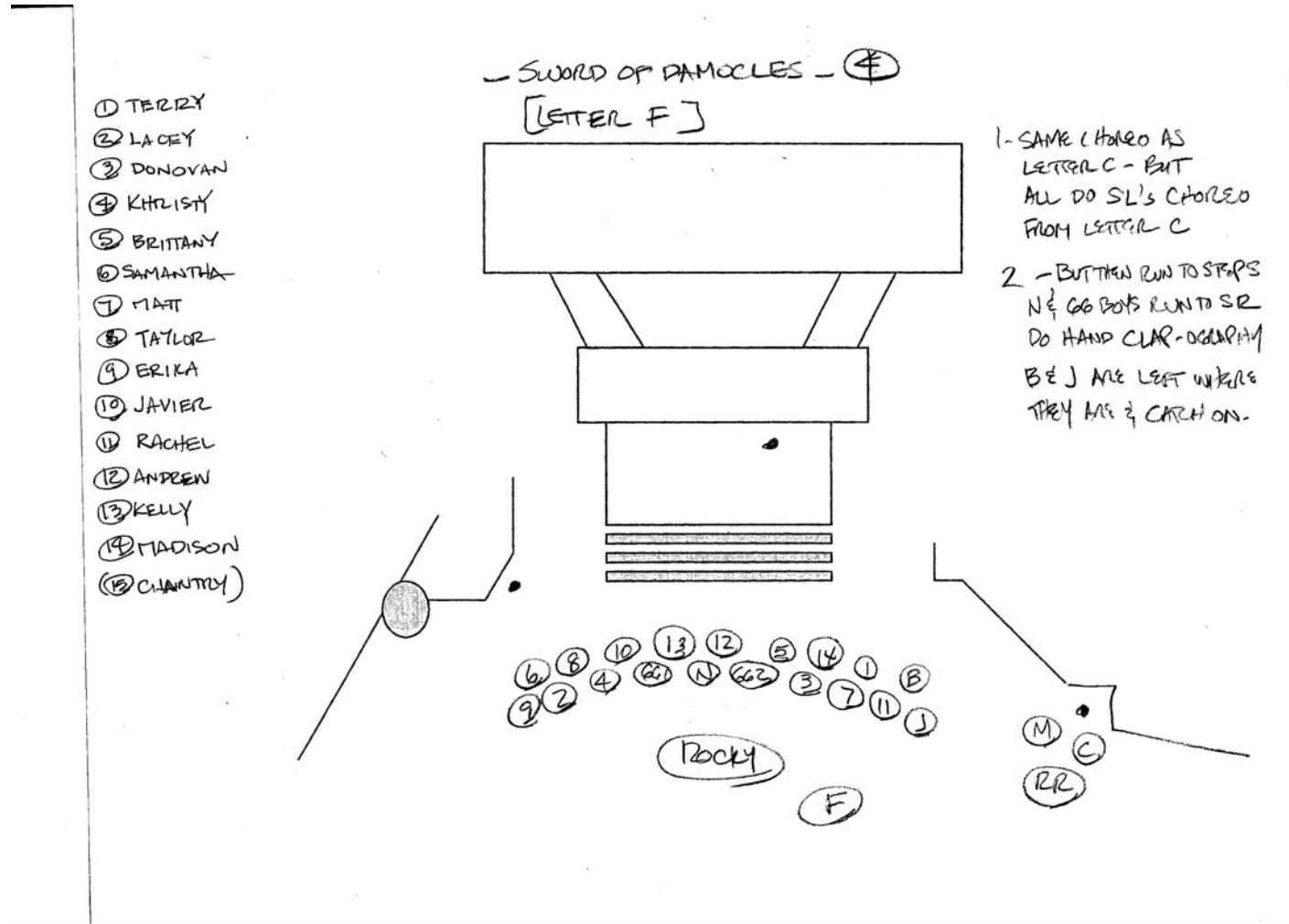
- 1 TERRI
- 2 LACEY
- 3 DONOVAN
- 4 KRISTY
- 5 BRITTANY
- 6 SAMANTHA
- 7 MATT
- 8 TAYLOR
- 9 EMILIA
- 10 JAVIER
- 11 RACHEL
- 12 ANDREW
- 13 KELLY
- 14 MADISON



Note: Blocking indicates all staging at Letter C in the music of "Sword of Damocles." The Narrator moves in for her portion of the song.

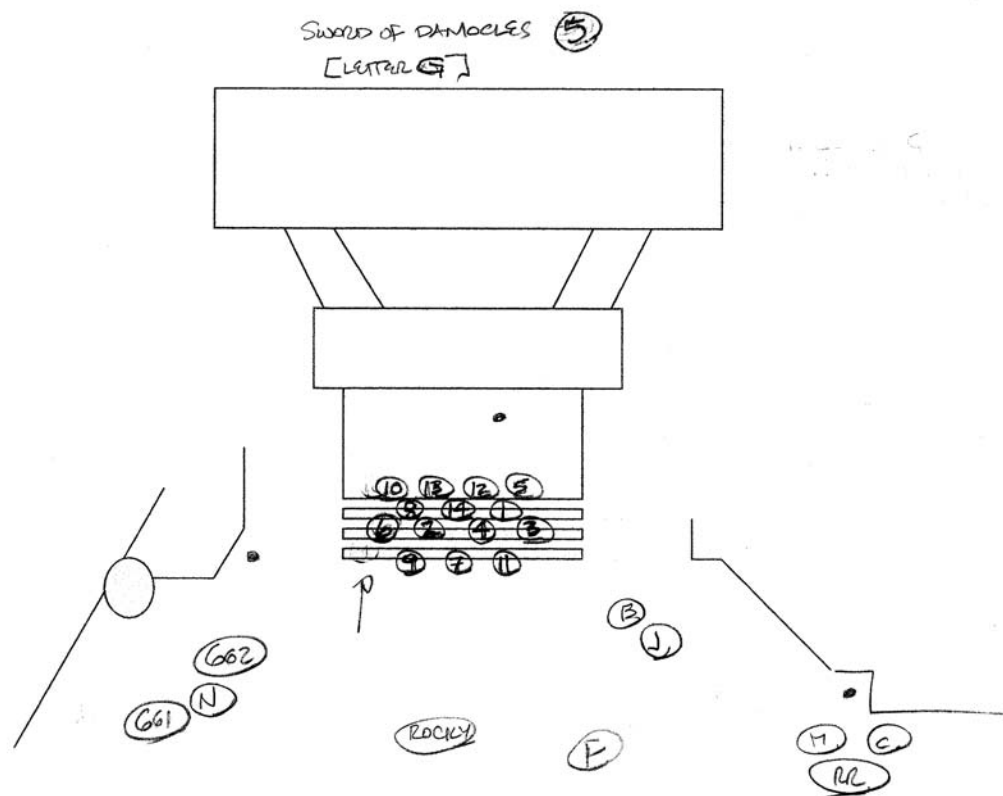


Note: Blocking indicates all staging at Letter E in the music of "Sword of Damocles."



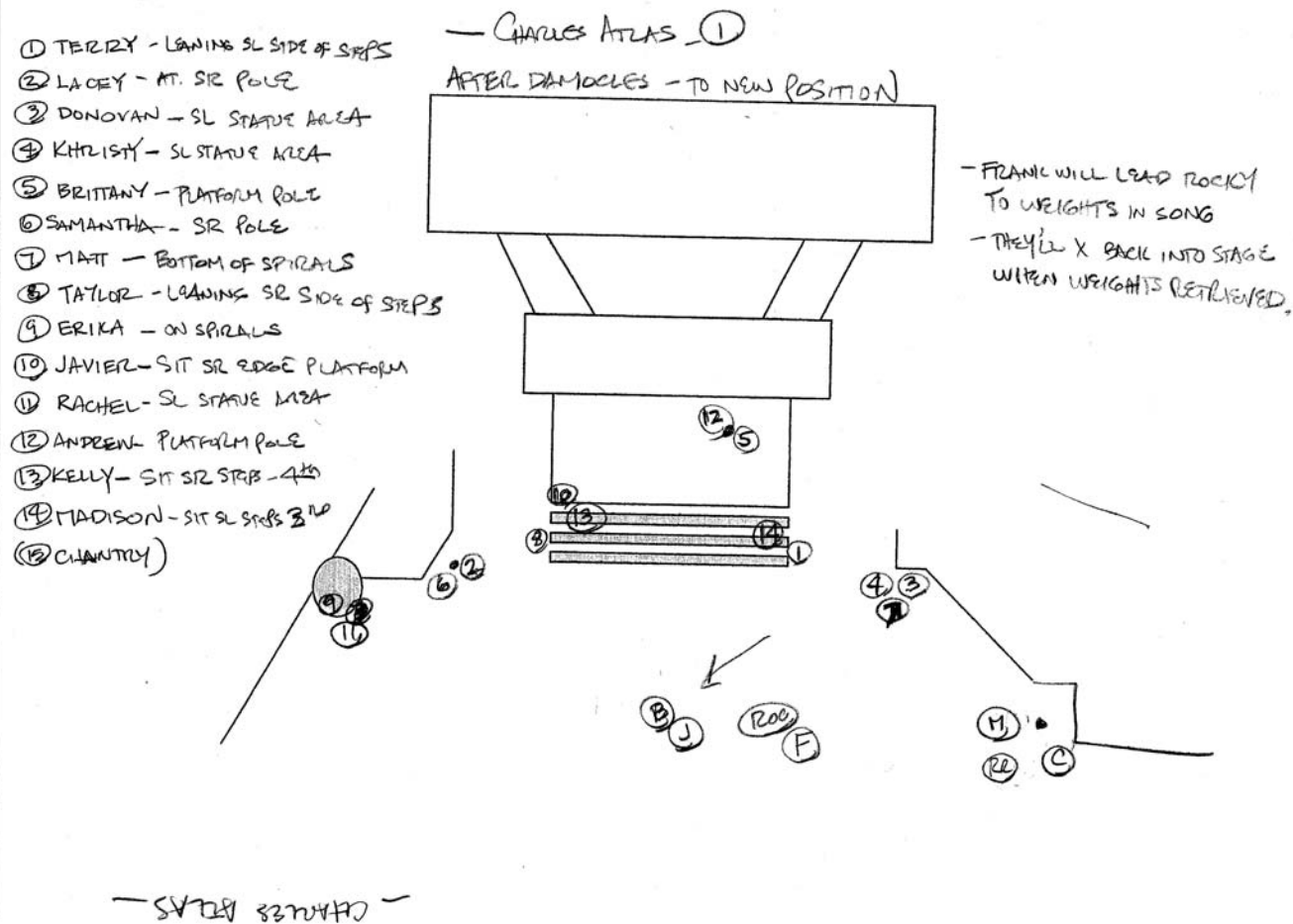
Note: Blocking indicates staging for all at Letter F of the music for "Sword of Damocles."

- 1 TERRY
- 2 LACEY
- 3 DONOVAN
- 4 KHRISTY
- 5 BRITTANY
- 6 SAMANTHA
- 7 MATT
- 8 TAYLOR
- 9 EMILIA
- 10 JAVIER
- 11 RACHEL
- 12 ANDREW
- 13 KELLY
- 14 MADISON



Note: Blocking indicates movement of Ushers at Letter G of music for "Sword of Damocles" through end of the song.

APPENDIX F
BLOCKING NOTES FOR “CHARLES ATLAS”

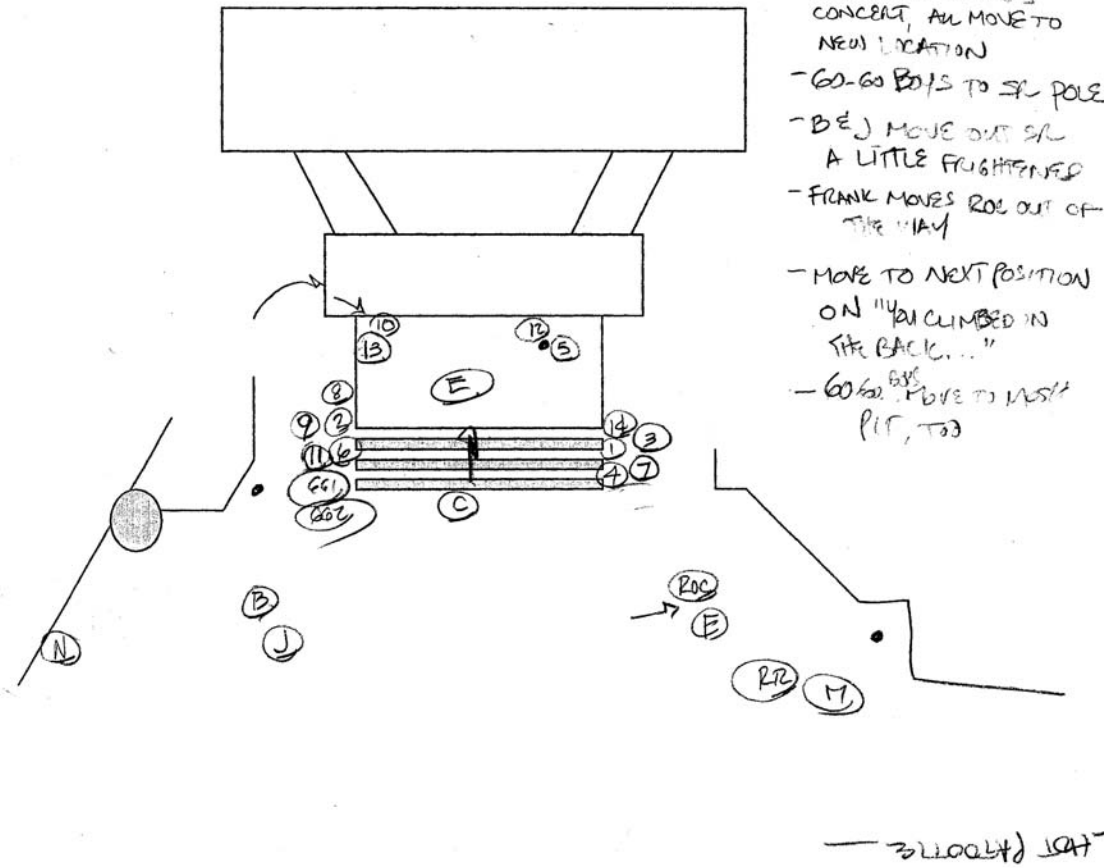


Note: Blocking indicates general positions for the song. There would be movement by Frank, Rocky, Brad and Janet.

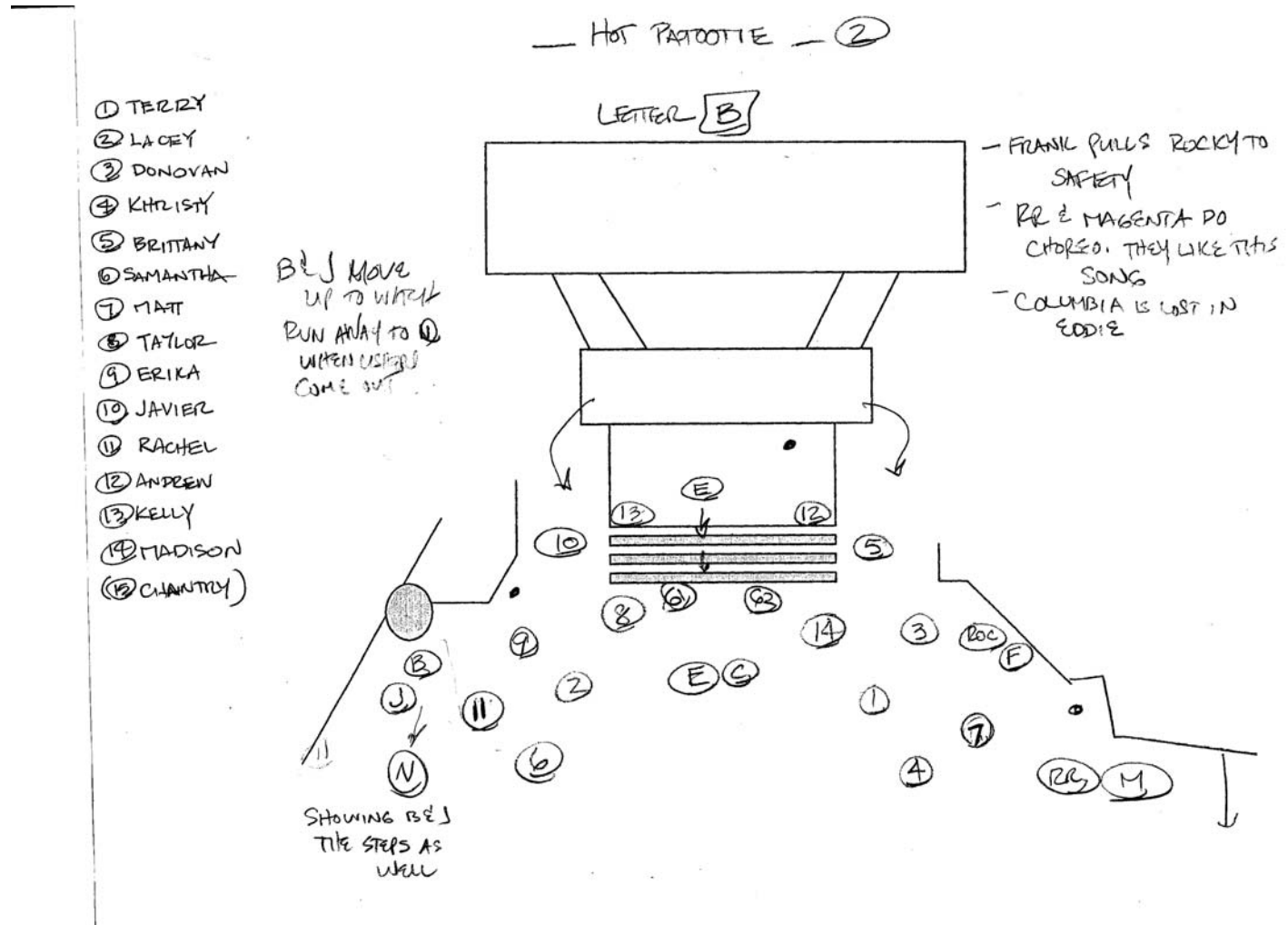
APPENDIX G
BLOCKING NOTES FOR “WHATEVER HAPPENED TO SATURDAY
NIGHT” (HOT PATOOTIE)

— HOT PATOOTIE — ①

- ① TERRY
- ② LACEY
- ③ DONOVAN
- ④ KRISTY
- ⑤ BRITTANY
- ⑥ SAMANTHA
- ⑦ MATT
- ⑧ TAYLOR
- ⑨ ERIKA
- ⑩ JAVIER
- ⑪ RACHEL
- ⑫ ANDREW
- ⑬ KELLY
- ⑭ MADISON
- ⑮ CHANTY



Note: Blocking indicates Eddie's rise from trapdoor at beginning of song and Ushers positions in the mosh pit.



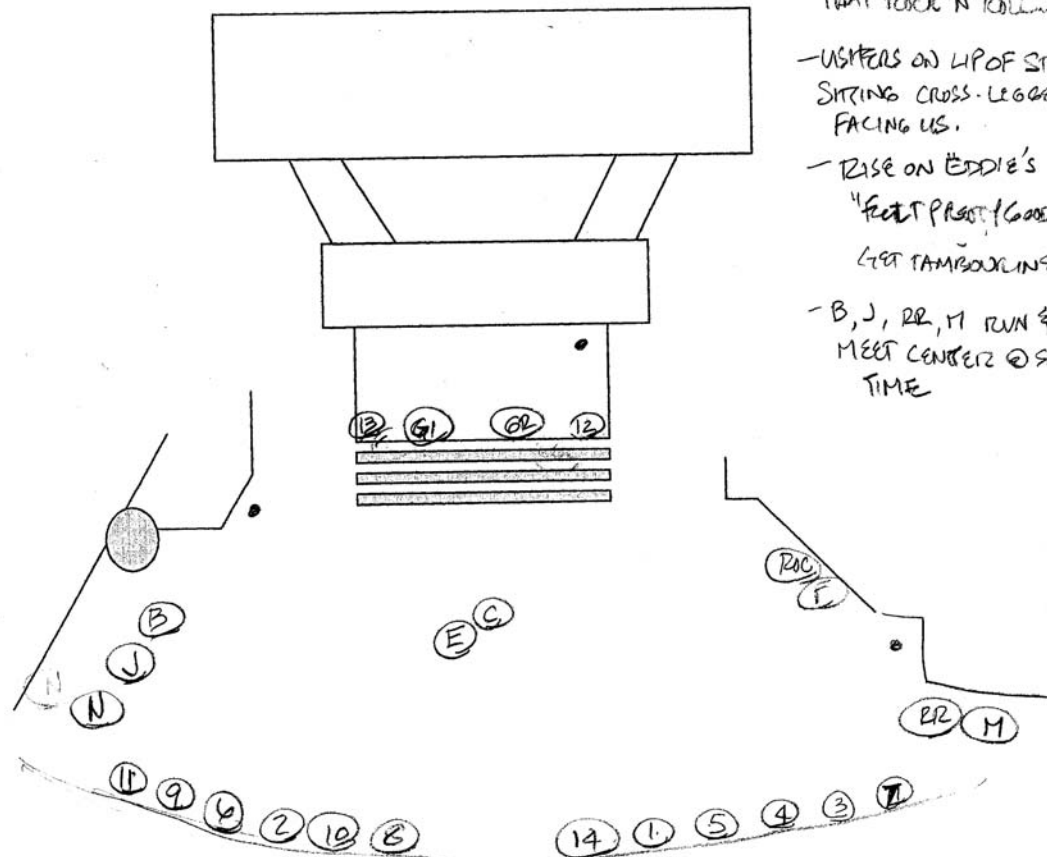
Note: Blocking indicates positions as Ushers open up to dance at Letter B of the music.

- ① TERRY
- ② LACEY
- ③ DONOVAN
- ④ KHRISTY
- ⑤ BRITTANY
- ⑥ SAMANTHA
- ⑦ MATT
- ⑧ TAYLOR
- ⑨ ERIKA
- ⑩ JAVIER
- ⑪ RACHEL
- ⑫ ANDREW
- ⑬ KELLY
- ⑭ MADISON
- ⑮ CHANTY

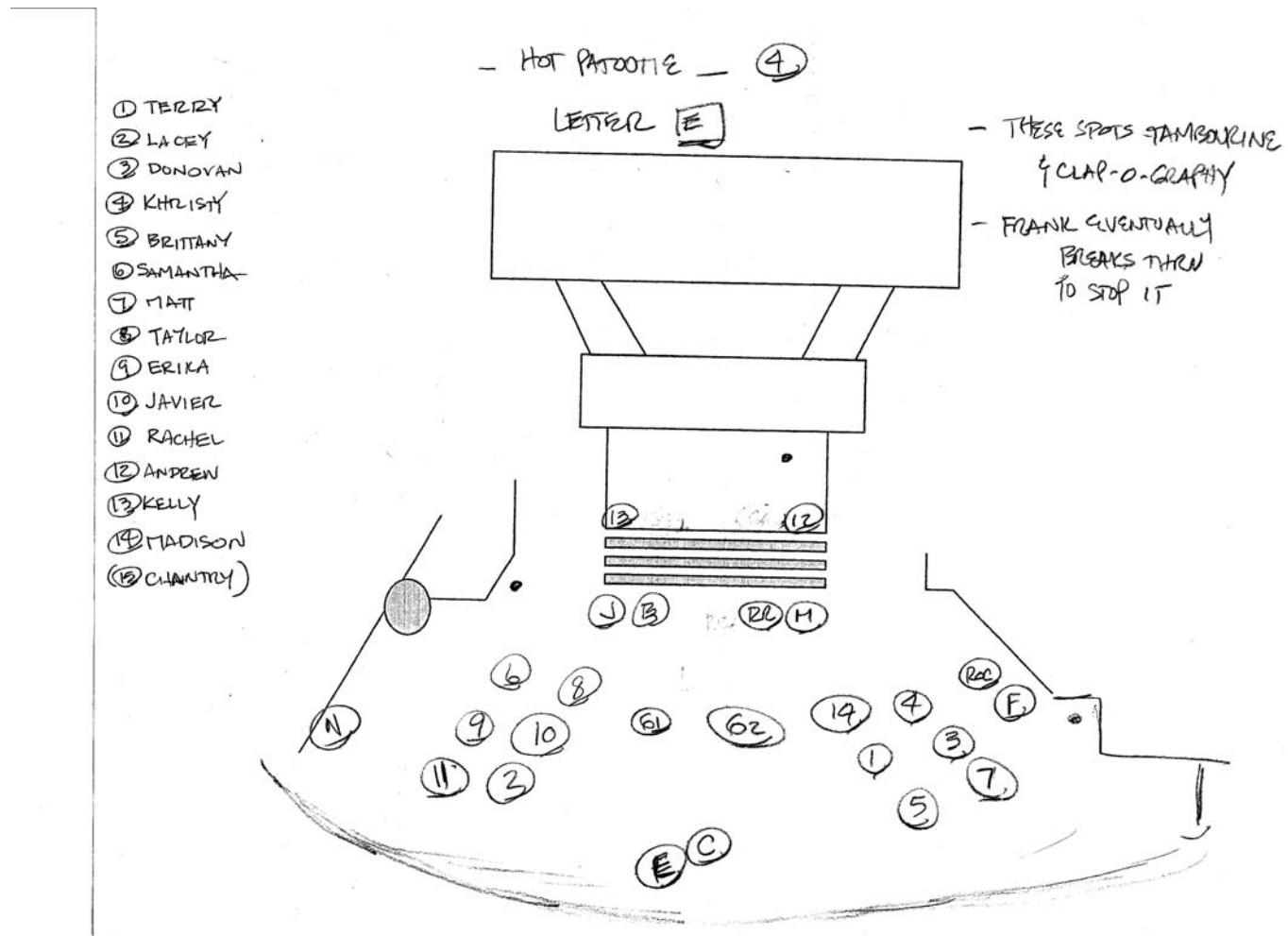
— HOT PADDOCK — (3)

LETTER [C]

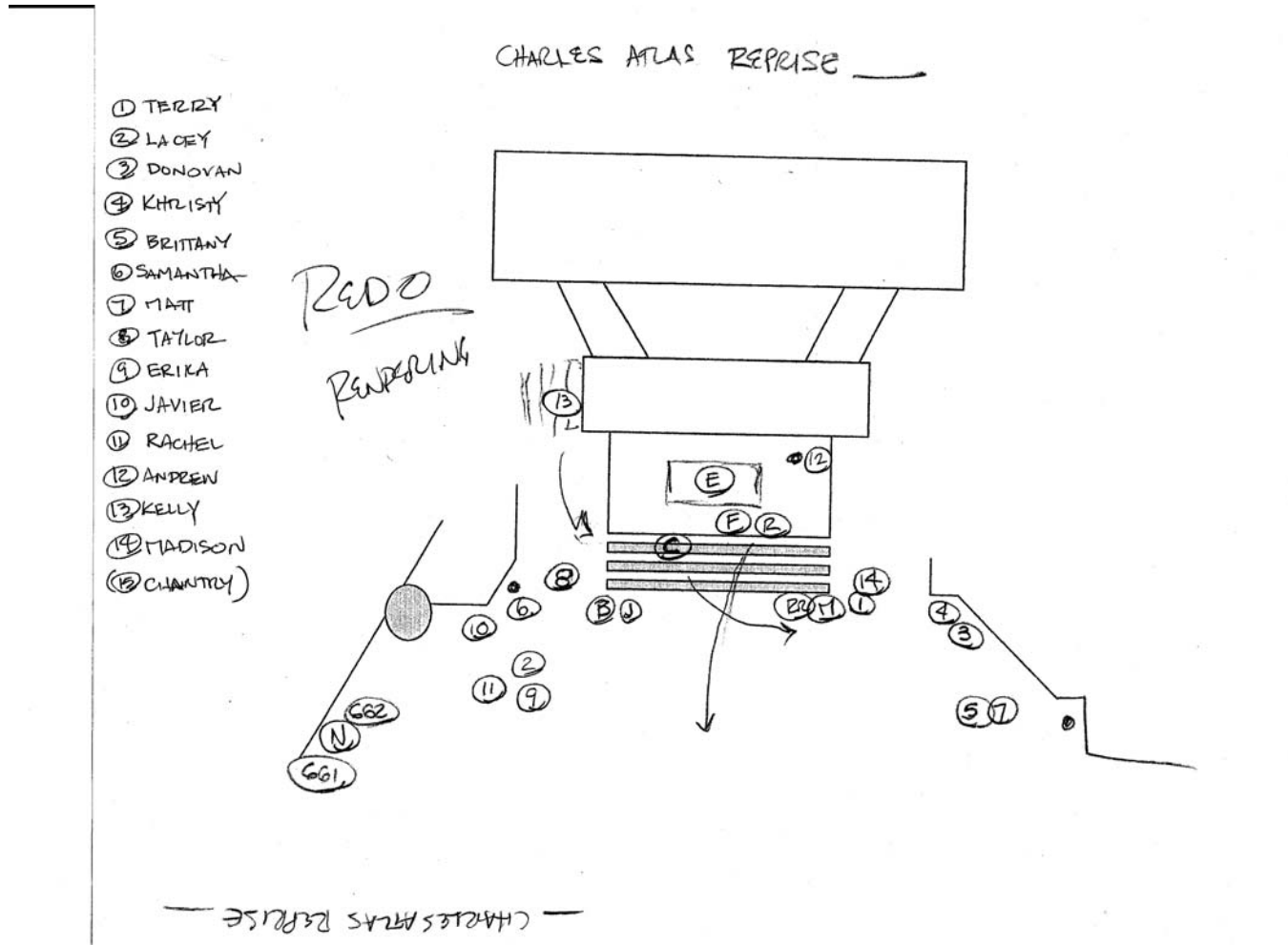
- RUN TO NEXT POSITION ON 4th "I REALLY LOVE THAT ROCK 'N ROLL."
- USHERS ON LIP OF STAGE SITTING CROSS-LEGGED FACING US.
- RISE ON EDDIE'S "FEET PRETTY GOOD..." GET TAMBOURINES
- B, J, RR, M RUN & MEET CENTER @ SAME TIME



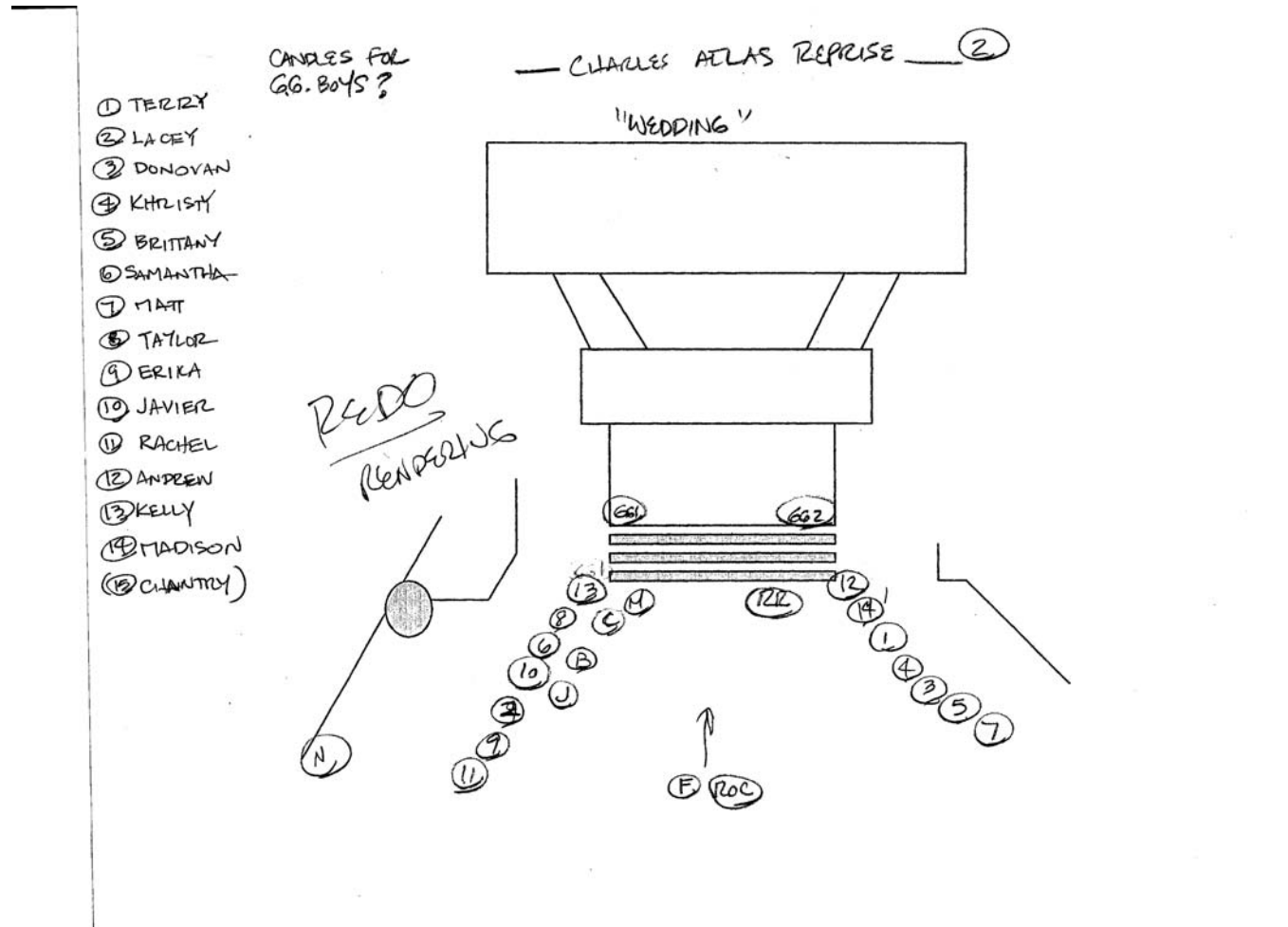
Note: Blocking indicates all positions as Eddie is encircled at Letter C of the music.



APPENDIX H
BLOCKING NOTES FOR “CHARLES ATLAS REPRISE

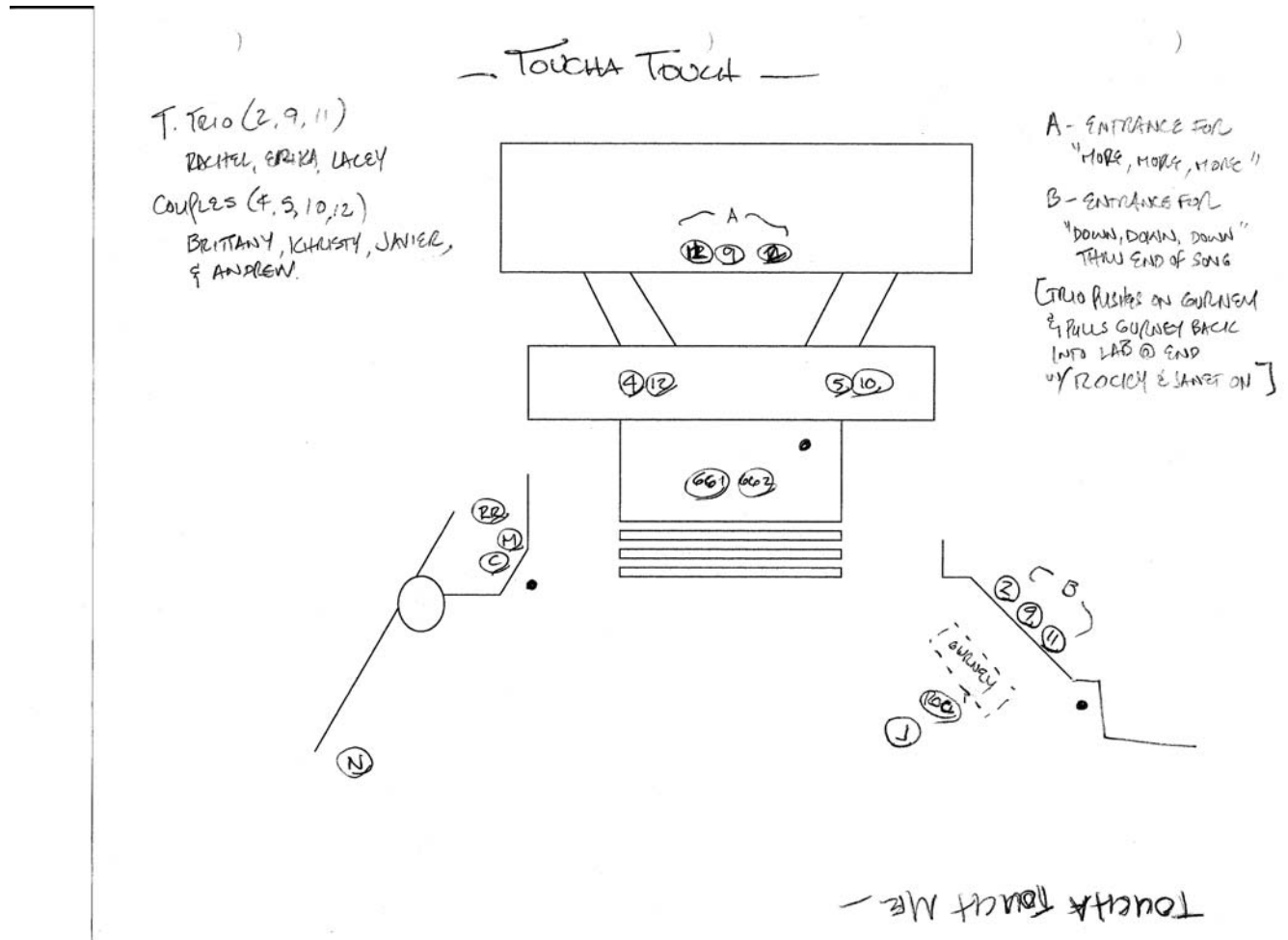


Note: Blocking indicates positions for after the slaying of Eddie. The offstage scene was moved stage left so my blocking was altered to accommodate.



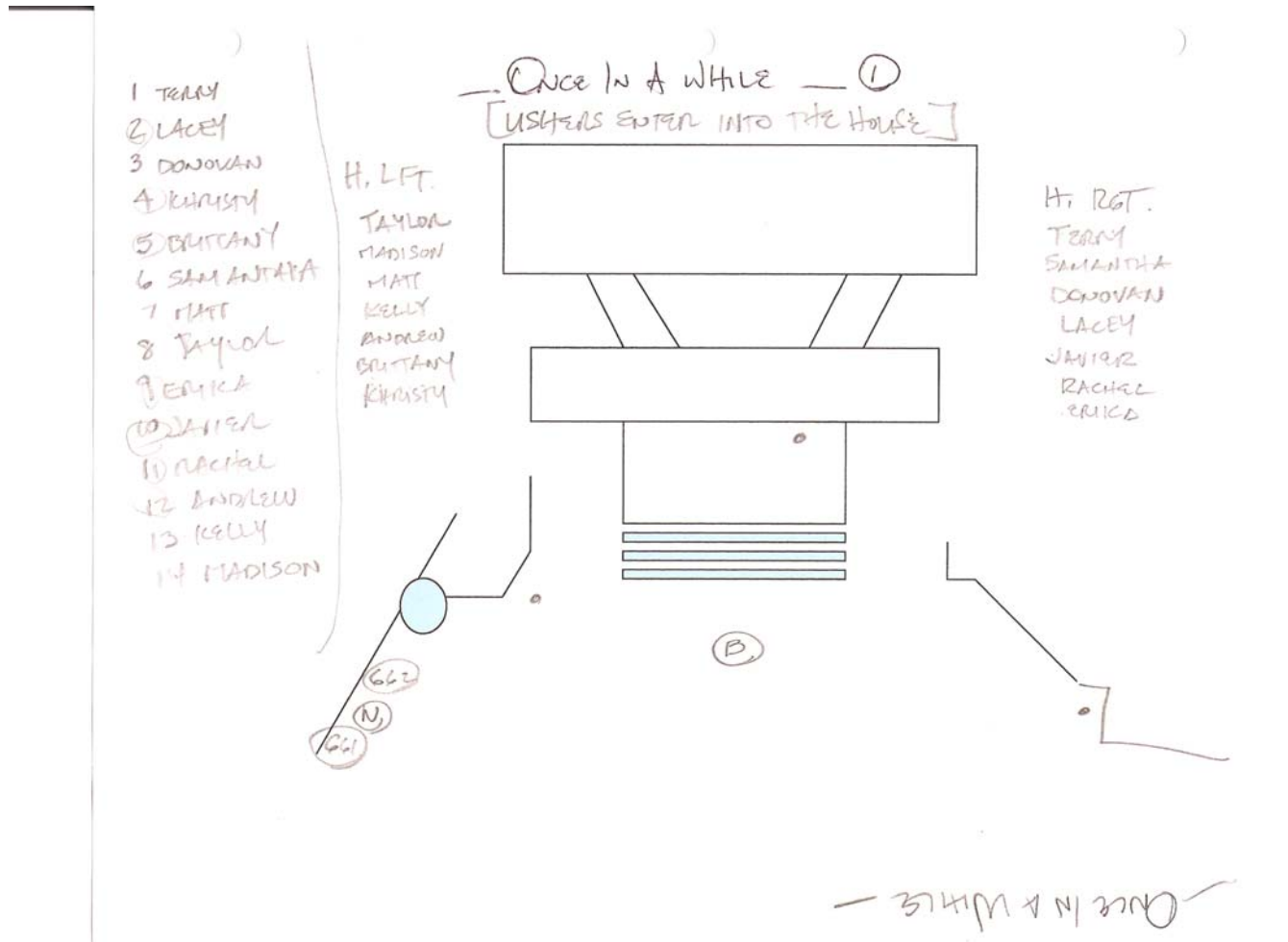
Note: Blocking indicates positions for the wedding of Frank and Rocky. Eventually some Ushers were moved to stand on the escape stairs from the upstage sides of the center platform – serving as the wedding party.

APPENDIX I
BLOCKING NOTES FOR “TOUCH-A TOUCH ME”



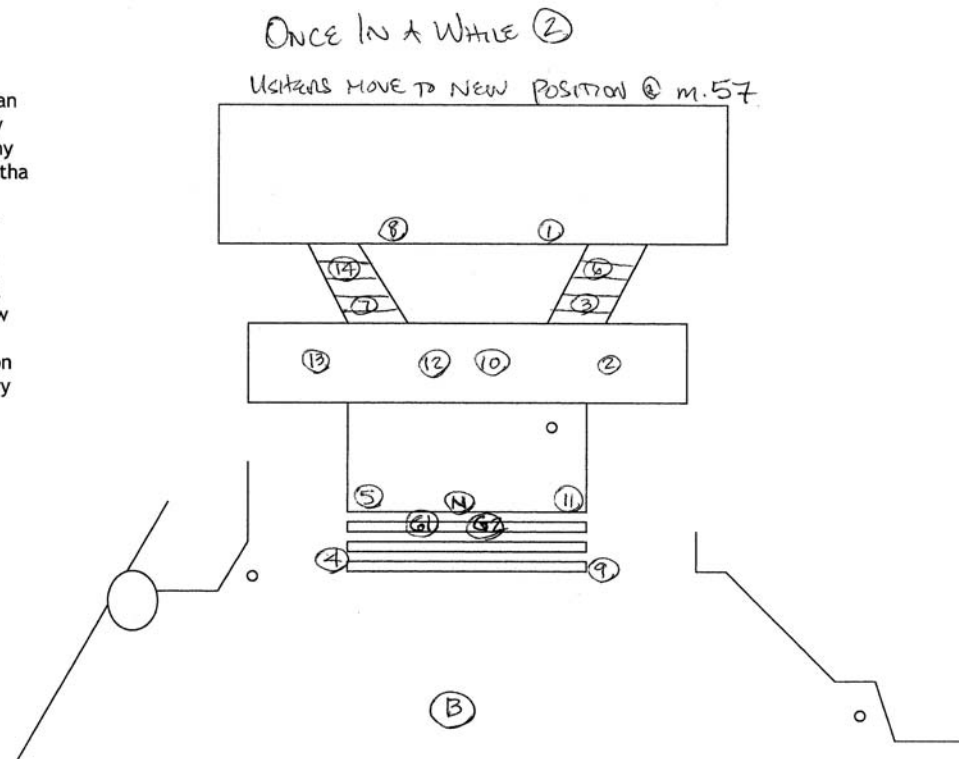
Note: Blocking indicates general positions for Janet, Rocky, Tranny Trio, Riff Raff, Magenta, Columbia, Narrator and the three dancing couples. Tranny Trio Position A was eventually moved to stage level in front of steps to center platform.

APPENDIX J
BLOCKING NOTES FOR “ONCE IN A WHILE”



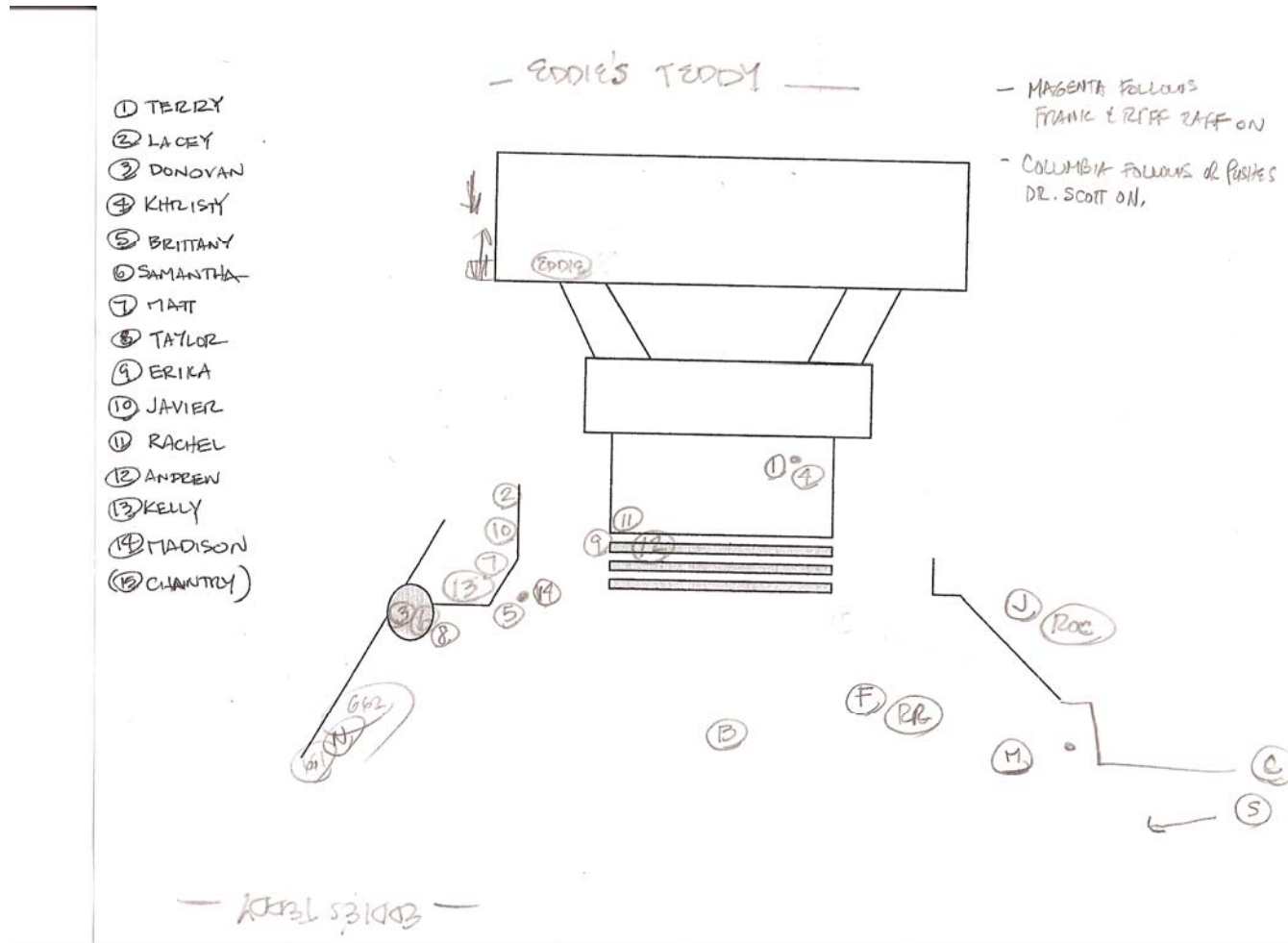
Note: Blocking indicates Brad at center for beginning of the song. We would start him on the stairs of center platform with the Slave Boys as his confidantes. The Ushers would through the theatre (as indicated on this sheet).

1. Terry
2. Lacey
3. Donovan
4. Khristy
5. Brittany
6. Samantha
7. Matt
8. Taylor
9. Erika
10. Javier
11. Rachel
12. Andrew
13. Kelli
14. Madison
15. Chantry



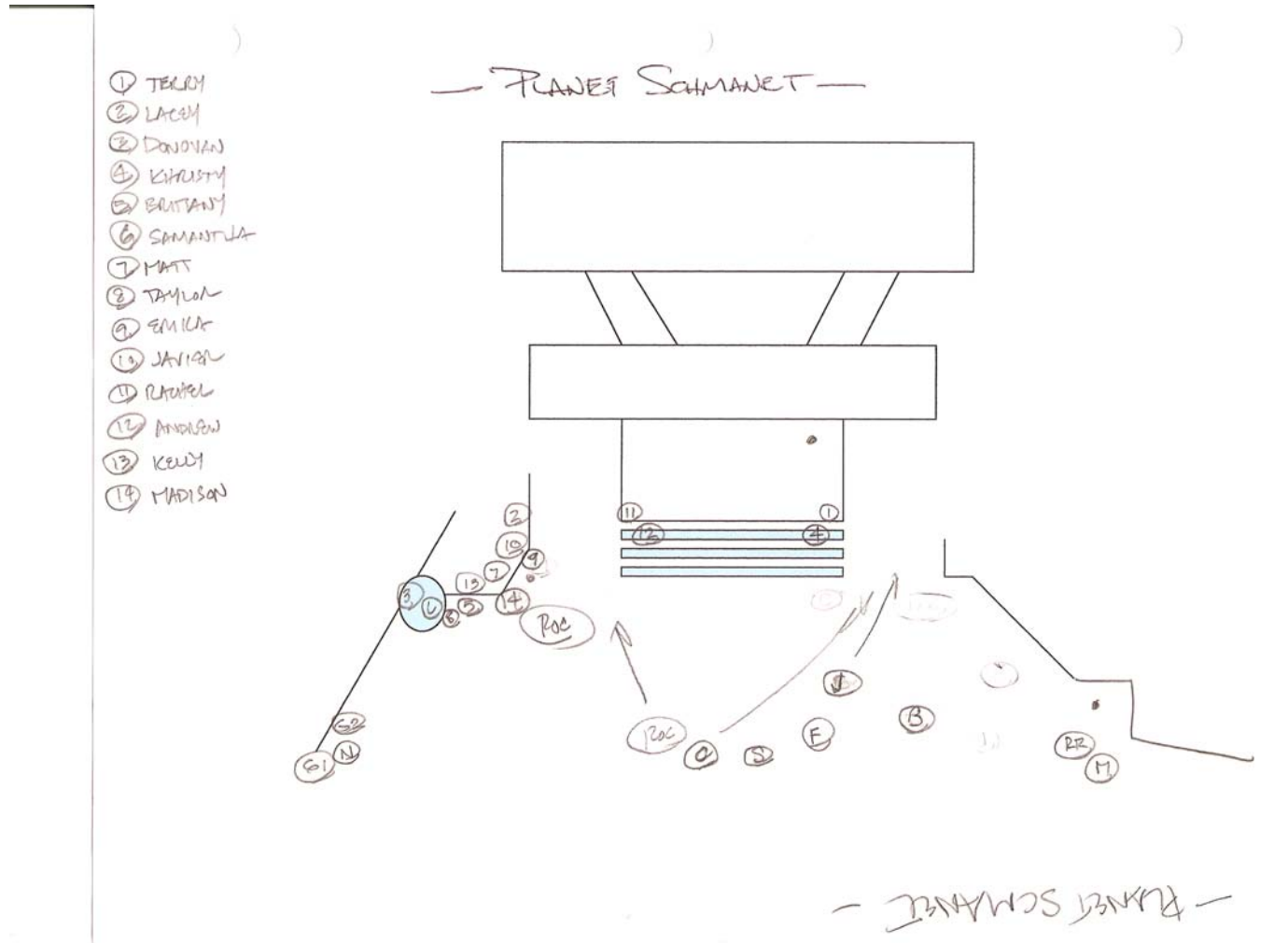
Note: Blocking indicates the positions for Brad's celestial choir to the end of the song.

APPENDIX K
BLOCKING NOTES FOR “EDDIE’S TEDDY”



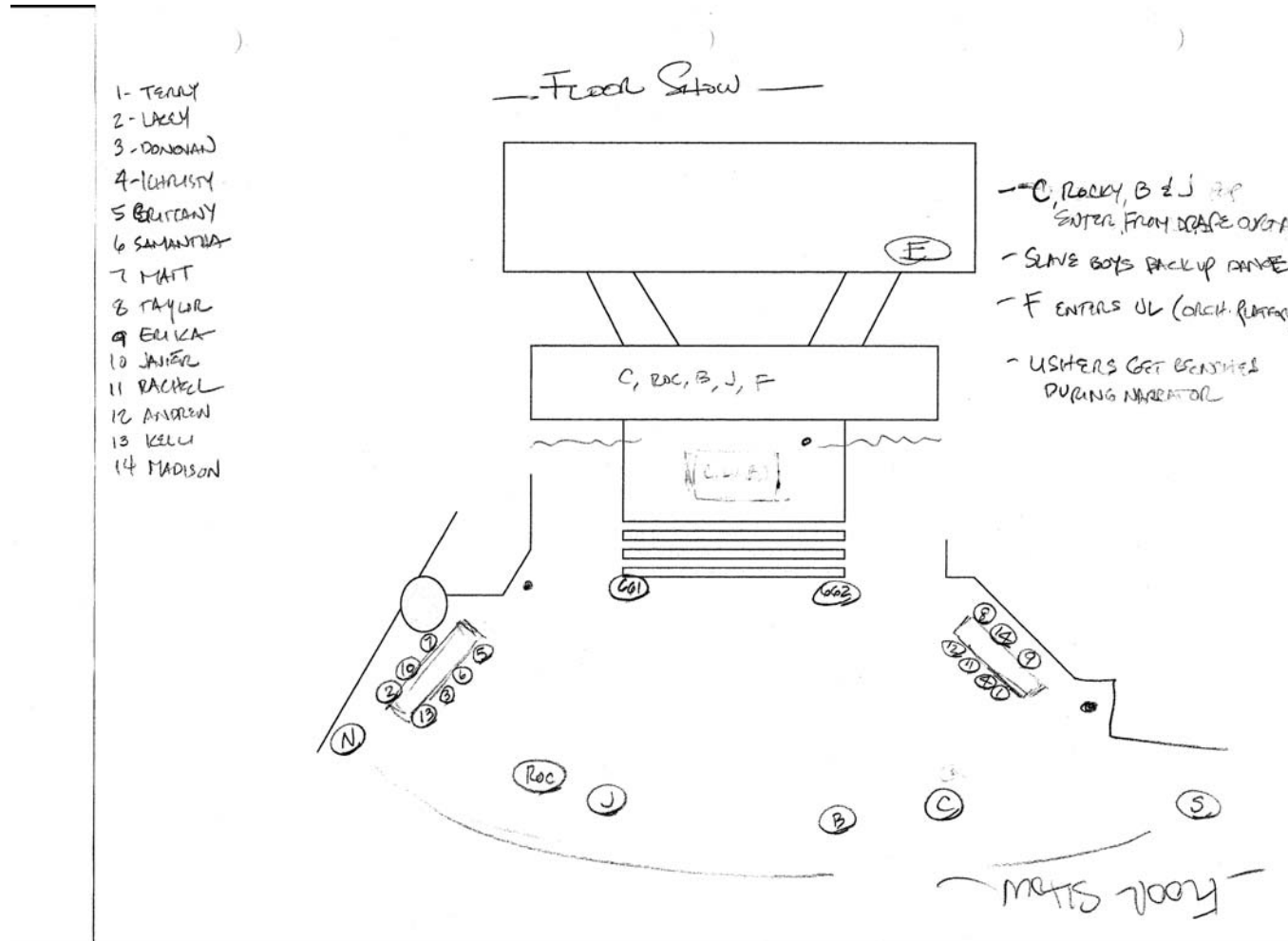
Note: Blocking indicates general staging for the number and Dr. Scott's entrance. The characters moved around these general positions except Dr. Scott who ended center stage.

APPENDIX L
BLOCKING NOTES FOR “PLANET SCHMANET”

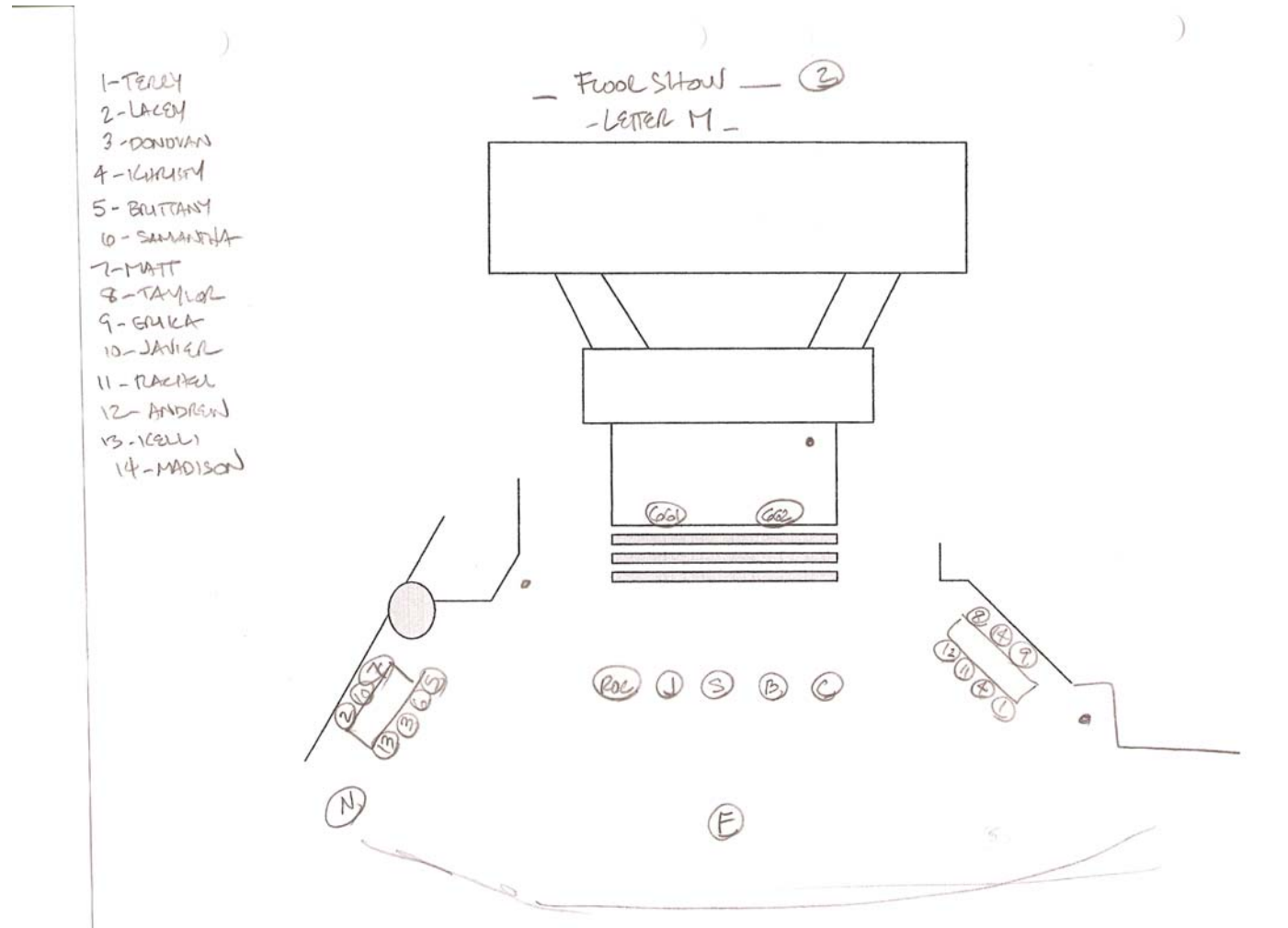


Note: Blocking indicates general staging for “Planet Schmanet” as well as exits for Rocky, Janet, Brad and Columbia.

APPENDIX M
BLOCKING NOTES FOR “FLOOR SHOW”

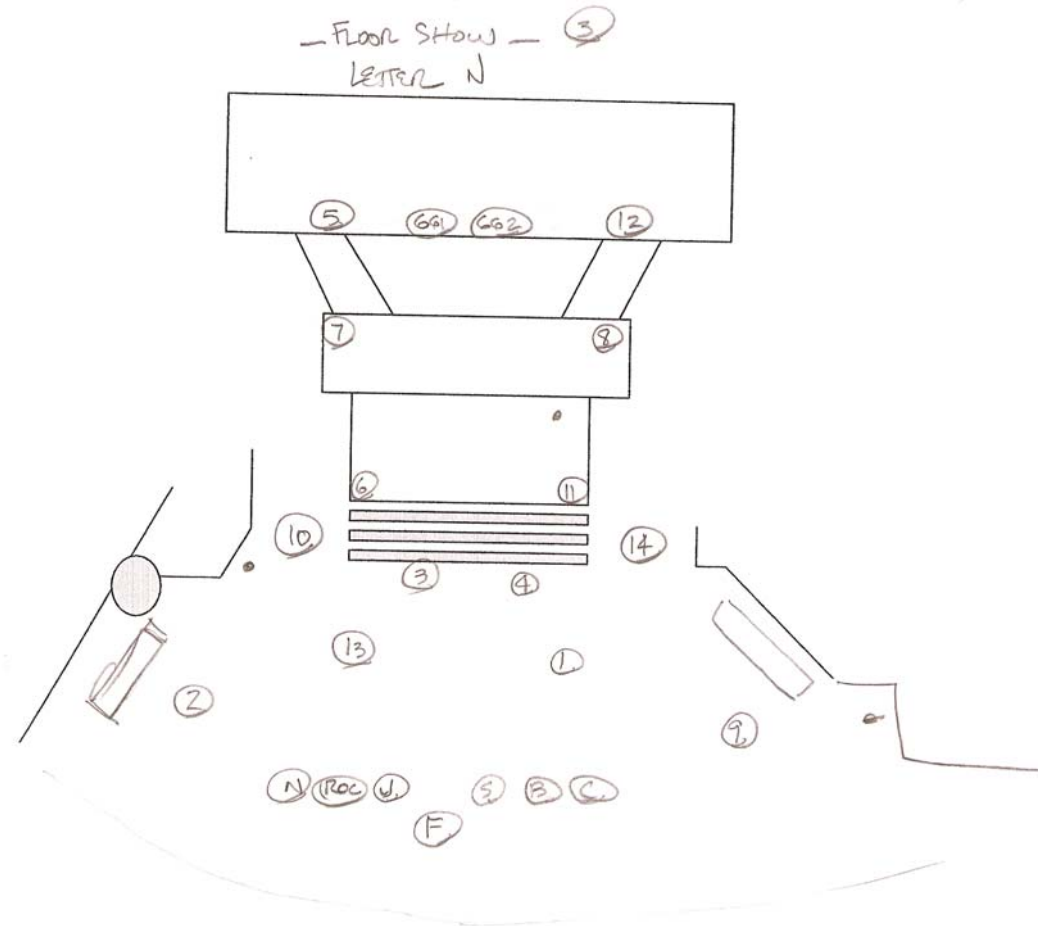


Note: Blocking indicates entrances for the featured actors as well as staging for freezes of Rocky, Janet, Brad and Columbia.

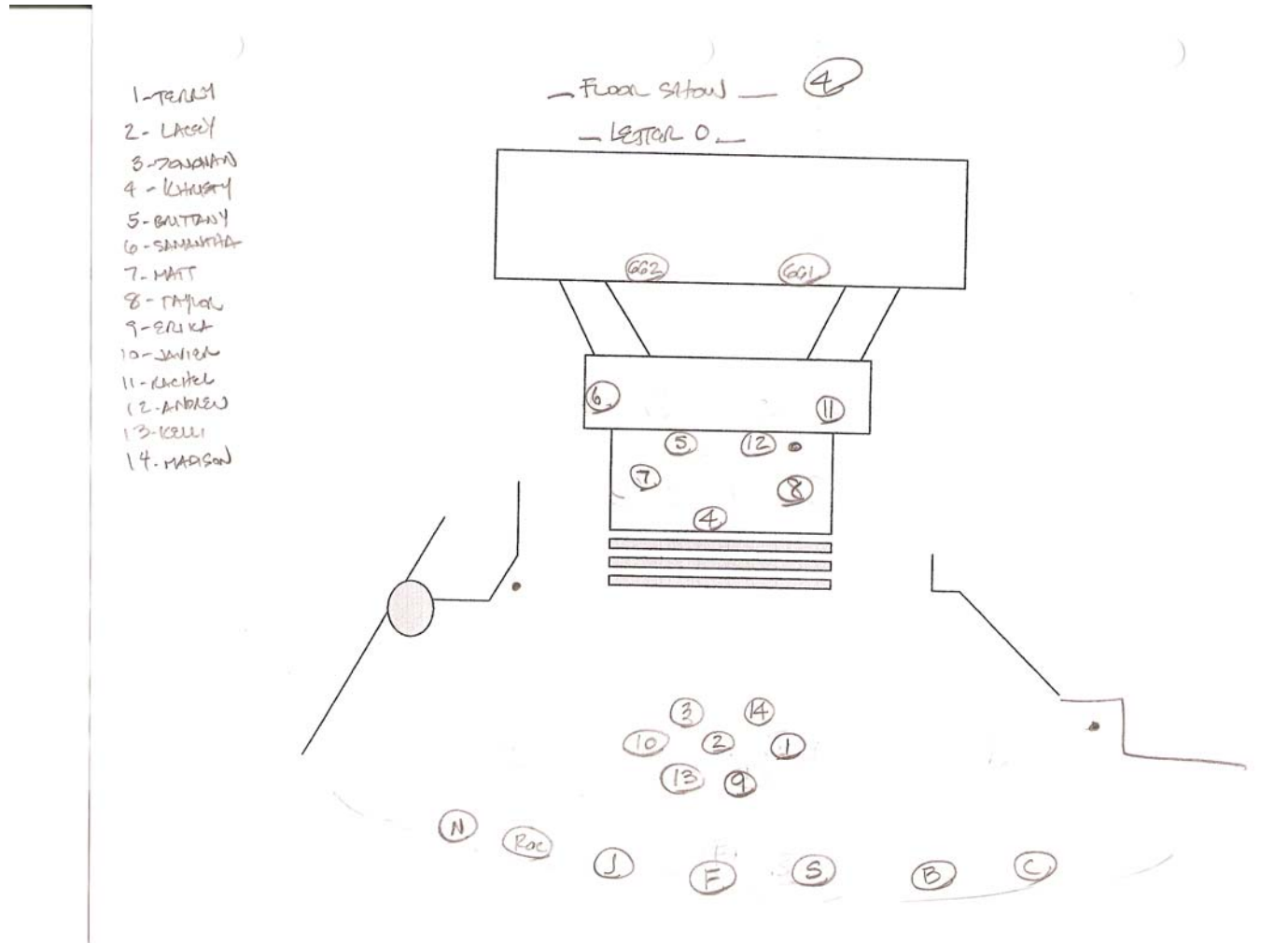


Note: Blocking indicates positions for the beginning of "Wild and Untamed Thing."

- 1-TERRY
- 2-LACEY
- 3-DONOVAN
- 4-KRISTY
- 5-BRISTAN
- 6-SAMANTHA
- 7-MATT
- 8-TIM LOU
- 9-ERIC
- 10-JANIE
- 11-RACHEL
- 12-ANDREW
- 13-KELI
- 14-MADISON

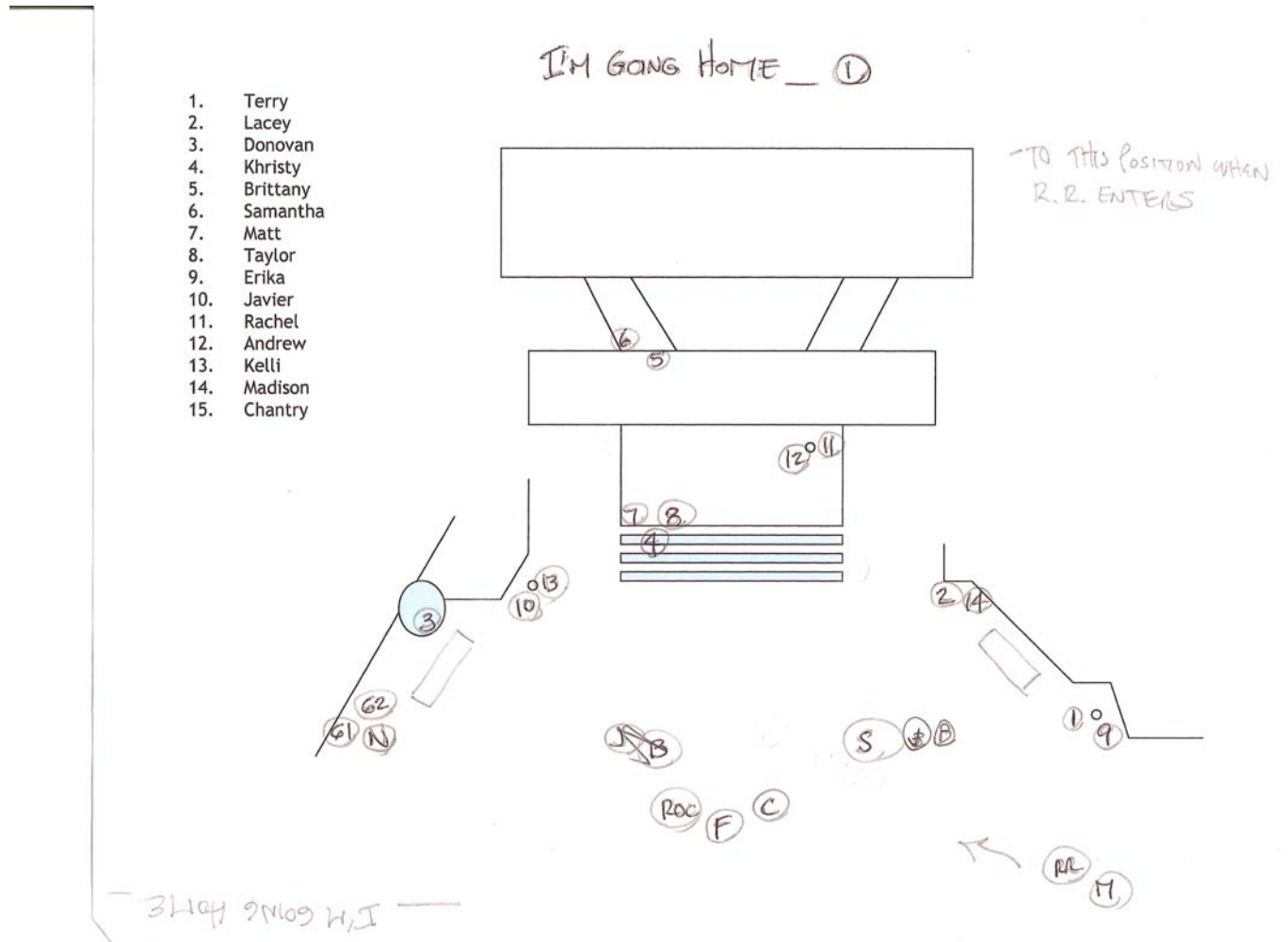


Note: Blocking indicates staging for Letter N of “Wild and Untamed.” Some positions were later altered for sightlines and dancing space.

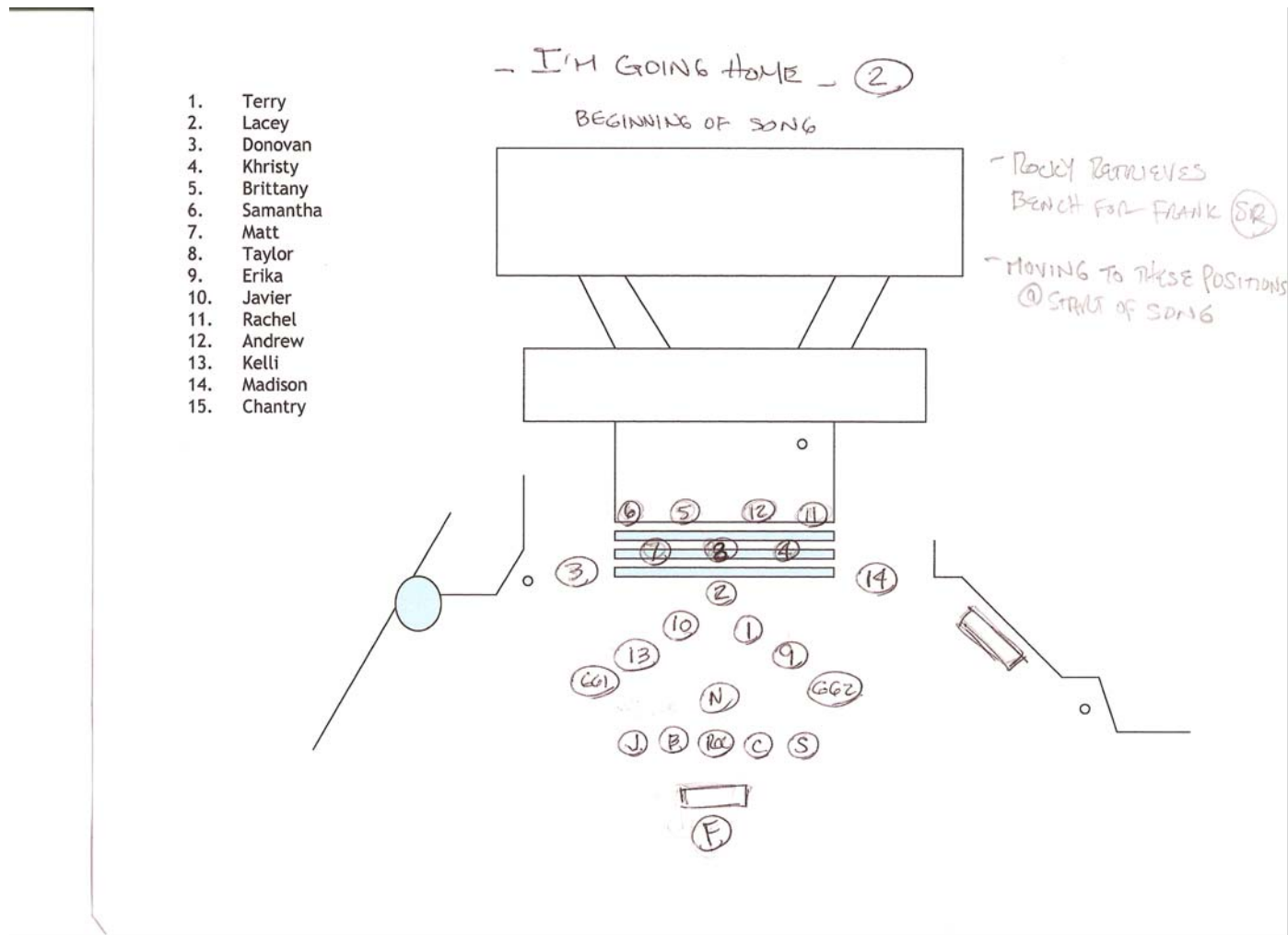


Note: Blocking indicates positions for Letter O of the music for "Wild and Untamed Thing." Again, some positions were altered for available dance space and some Ushers danced in the aisles of the theatre.

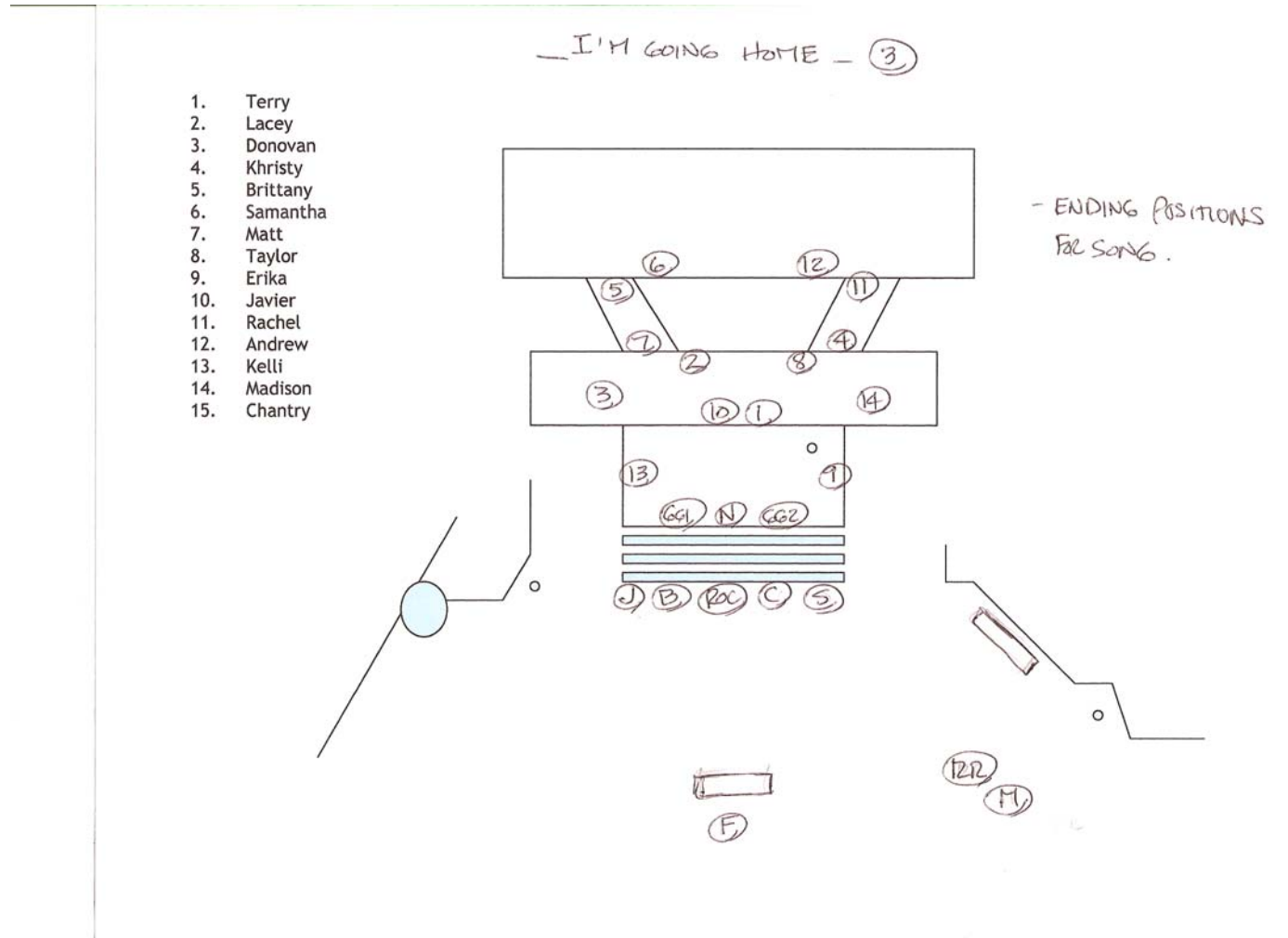
APPENDIX N
BLOCKING FOR “I’M GOING HOME”



Notes: Blocking indicates positions after Riff Raff and Magenta's Floor Show intrusion. Their entrance was later moved to house left rather than house right.

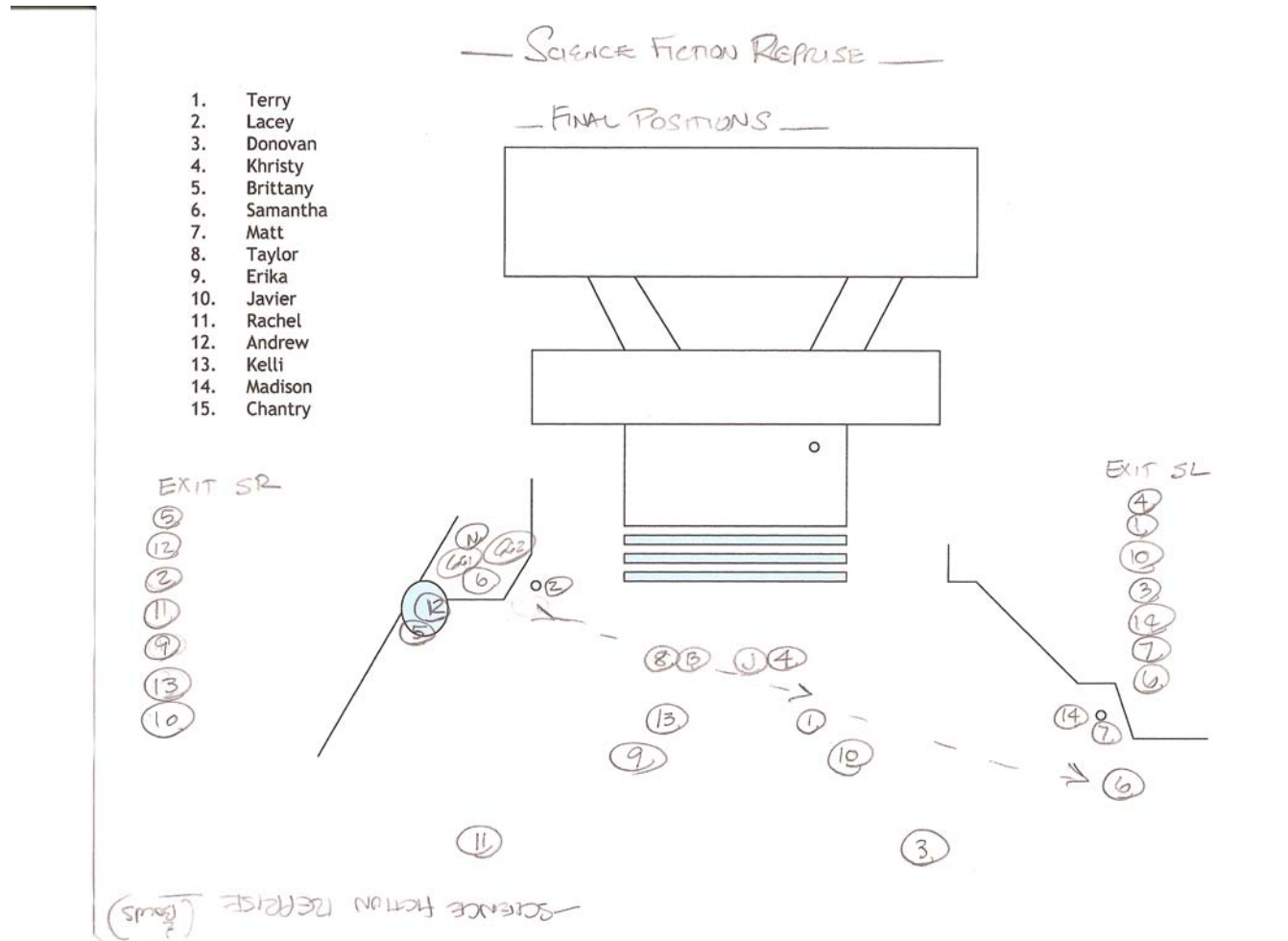


Note: Blocking indicates first positions of cast members upstage of Frank.



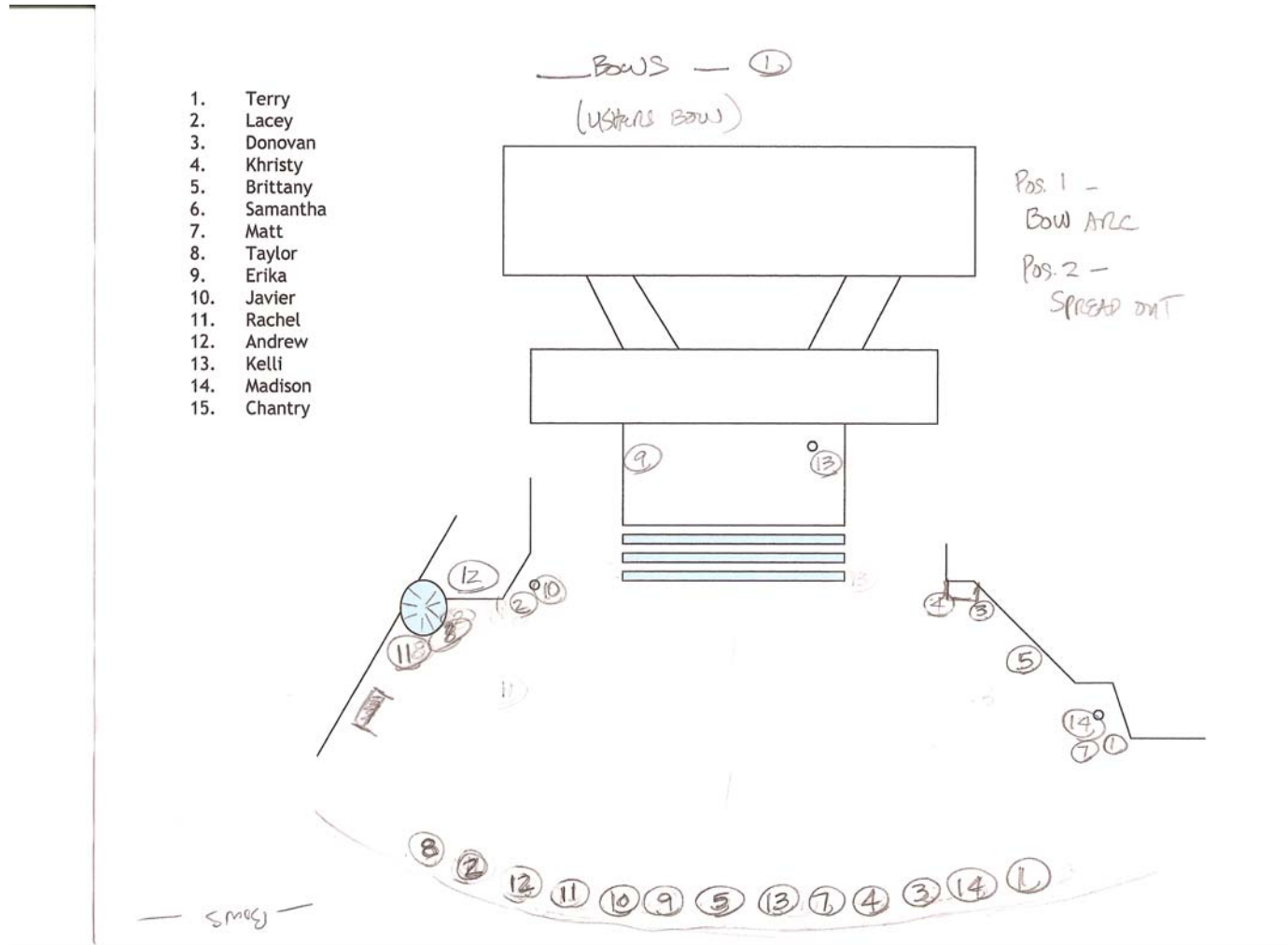
Note: Blocking indicates positions originally assigned to the cast for the end of the song. This was later changed to open up the stage and Riff Raff and Magenta were placed on the stage right balcony.

APPENDIX O
BLOCKING NOTES FOR “SCIENCE FICTION REPRISE”

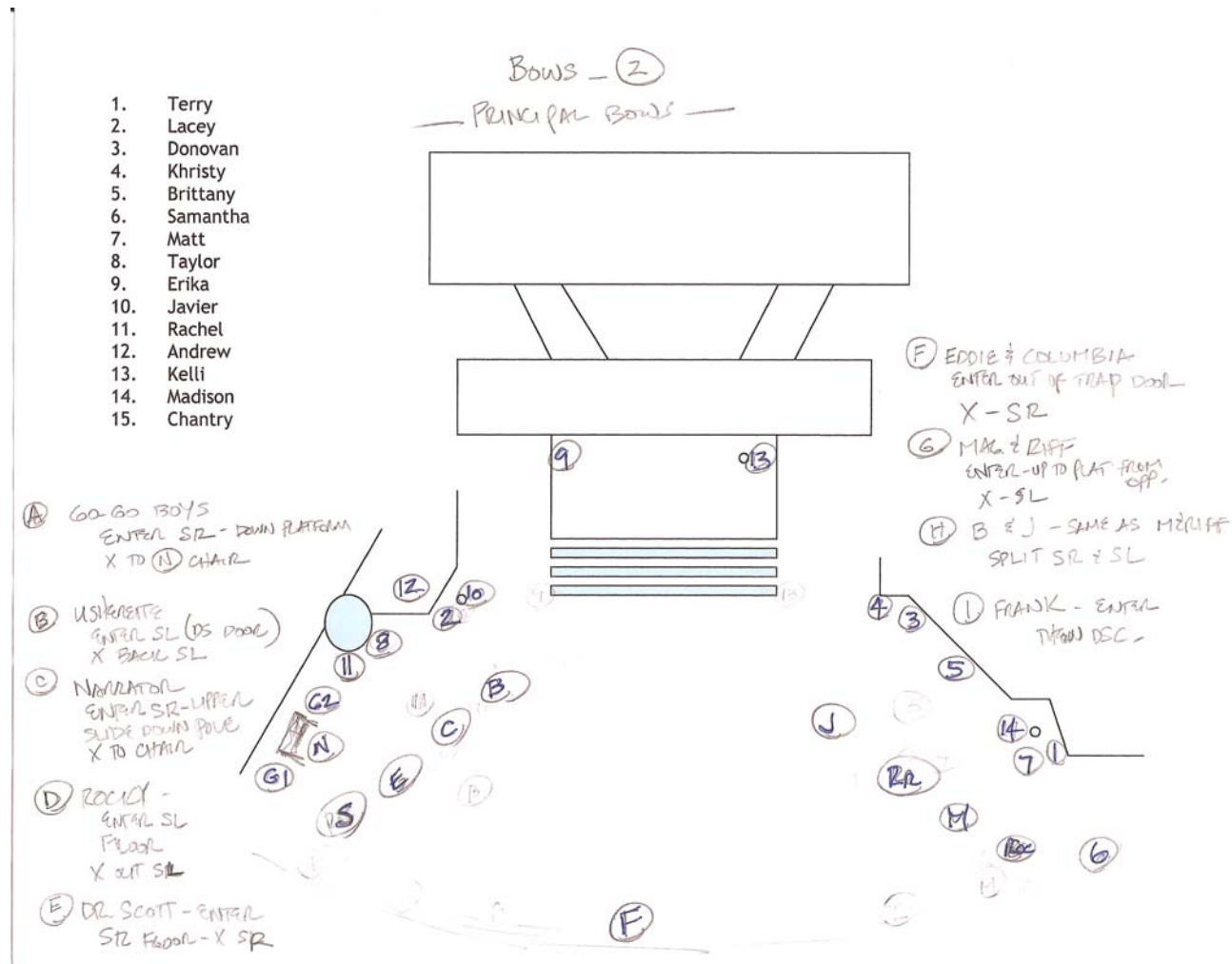


Note: Blocking indicates general positions for end of “Science Fiction Reprise” as well as the Usherettes journey to final position. Notes also indicate exits Ushers should take to prepare for bows.

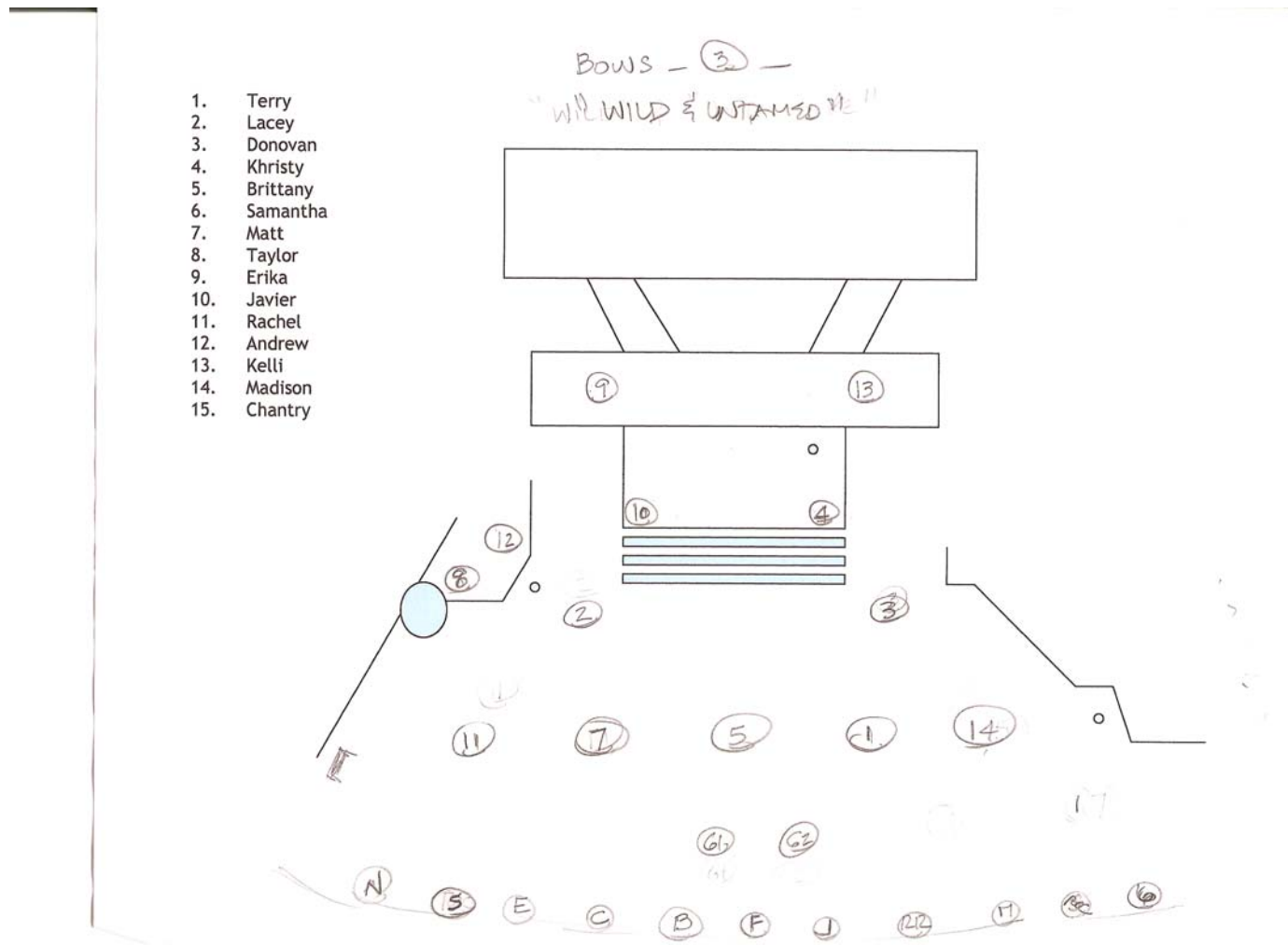
APPENDIX P
BLOCKING NOTES FOR BOWS



Note: Blocking indicates bow positions for Ushers and positions following their bow.

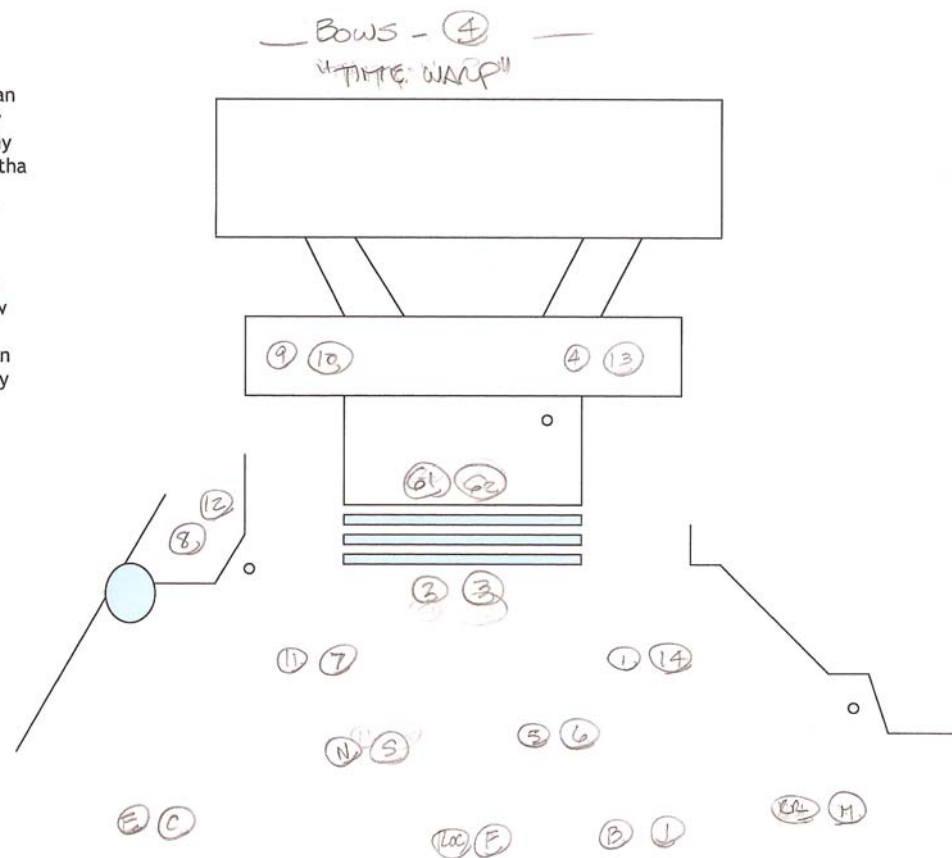


Notes: Blocking notes indicate order of featured and principal bows and their position following bow.



Note: Blocking indicates positions for dancing "Wild and Untamed Thing" after curtain call.

1. Terry
2. Lacey
3. Donovan
4. Khristy
5. Brittany
6. Samantha
7. Matt
8. Taylor
9. Erika
10. Javier
11. Rachel
12. Andrew
13. Kelli
14. Madison
15. Chantry



Note: Blocking indicates positions for dancing "Time Warp" after curtain call.

APPENDIX Q
SAMPLE CHOREOGRAPHY NOTES FOR “TIME WARP”

165

Time Warp
 REPEAT THEM TO 3RD MEASURE 30 THEN SAME CHOREO. HOP ON (L) KICK (R)
 LEG SCOOP SCOUTENOU MOUND

S
A

Let's do the Time Warp a - gain

T
B

W. P.

F C G D A

JUMP LEFT ON (3)
 SK PACING JUMP
 PACING MOUND (2) SHOULDER
 TO US

It's just a jump to the left

S
A

and then a step to the right

T
B

W. P.

A E7 E7

WALK (RT) CIRCLE SHOULDER PULSE TO FACING PARTNER

Time Warp 31

RT. ARM UP 1
RT. ARM HIP 2
REPEAT LFT. (3,4)
LOOK P.S. 5

with your hands on your hips _____

you bring your knees in

SCOOCH TO CHARITIES POUNDING SL DS LEGS 1 2 3 4 5

5 PELVIC THRUSTS TO EACH OTHER

tight _____ but it's the pel - vic thrust _____ that real - ly drives you in -

DIP BACK 2,3,4 UP 5,6 STEP 2x's (7,8) TO PACE

[REPEAT 1ST TIME]

sane _____ Let's do the Time Warp a -

A A E7 E7 A A D D A A F C G D

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